GERRY ANDERSON'S

SPACE 1999

World

Authorised edition based on
the popular ITC Television series

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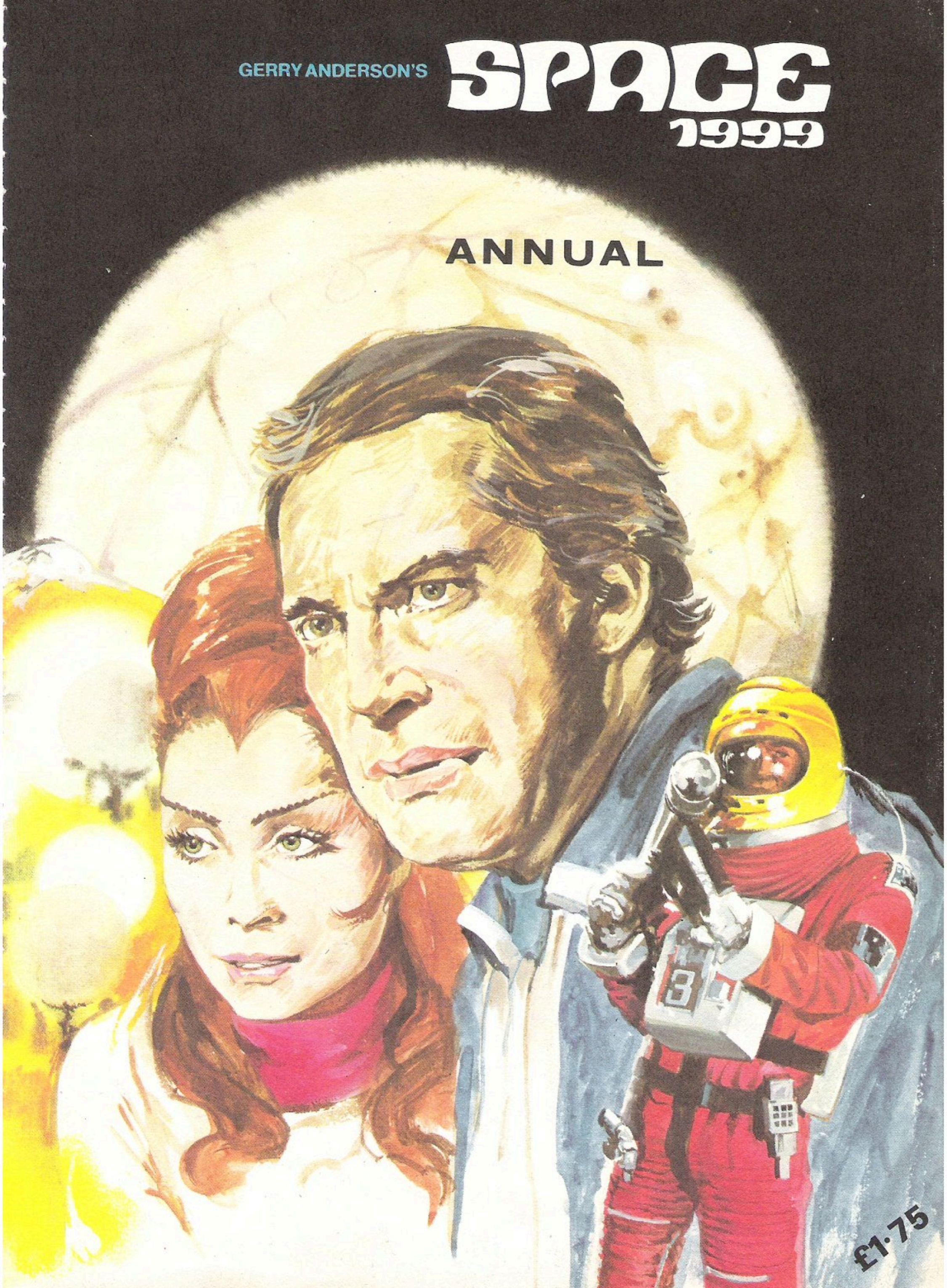
SPACE 1999

ANNUAL



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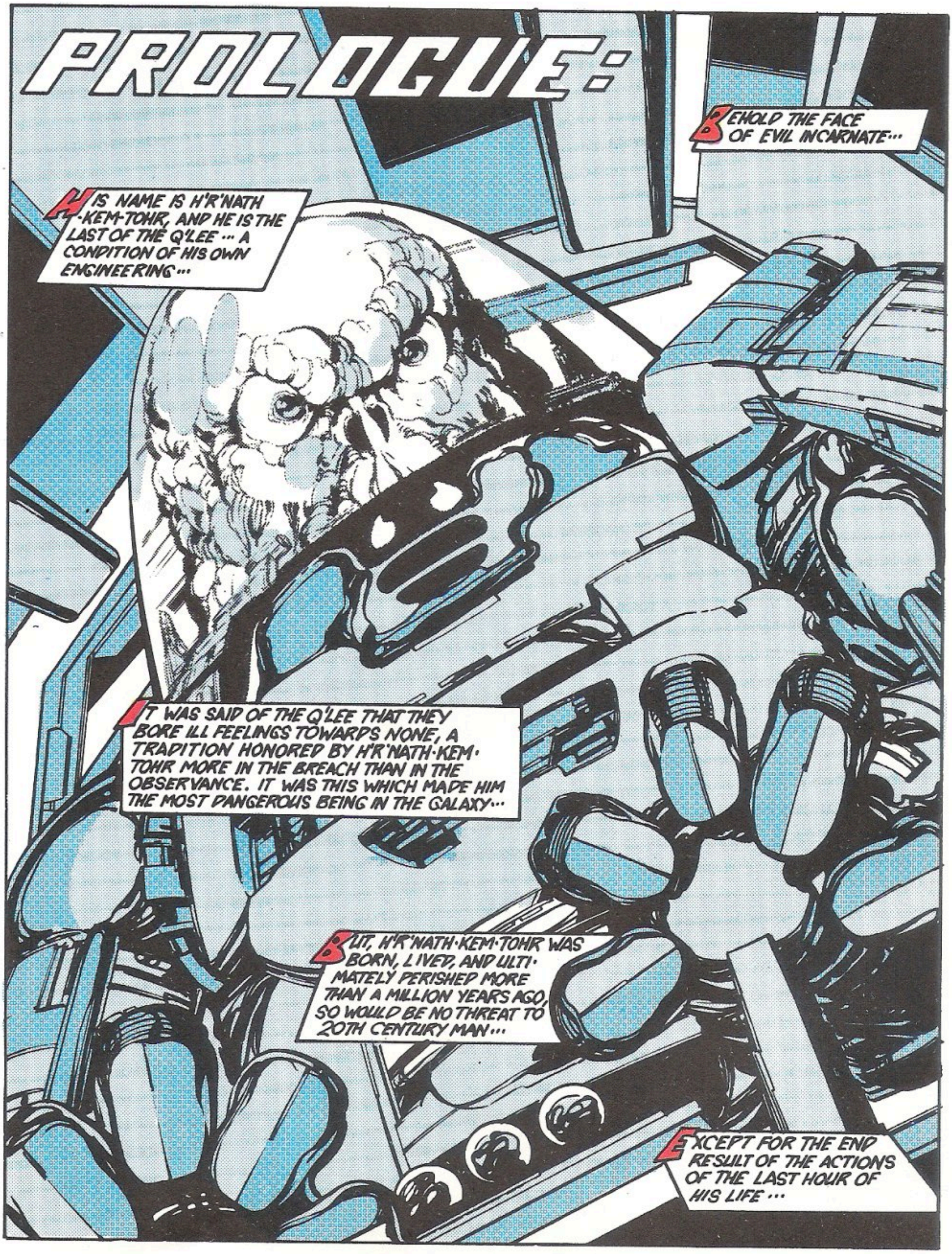
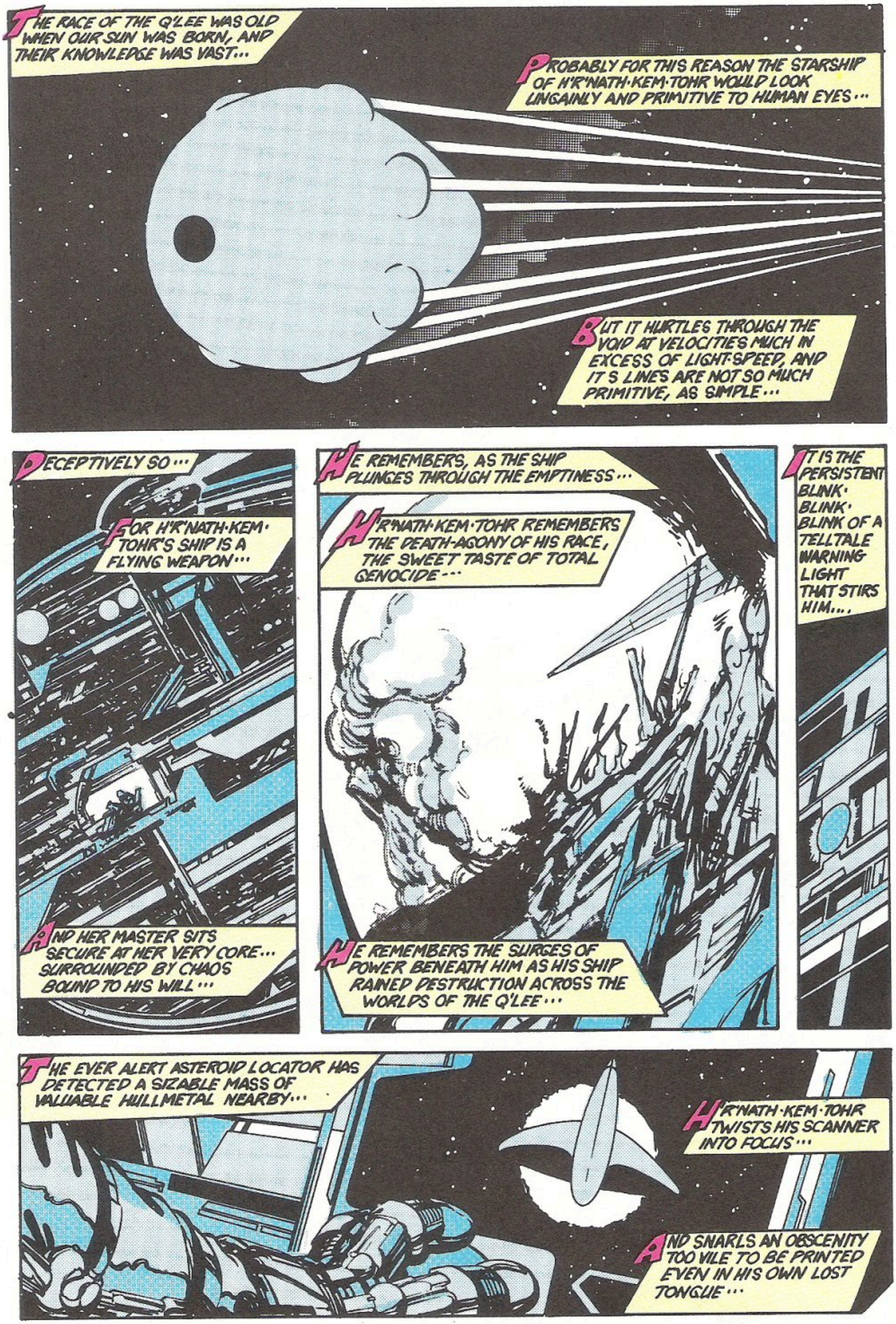
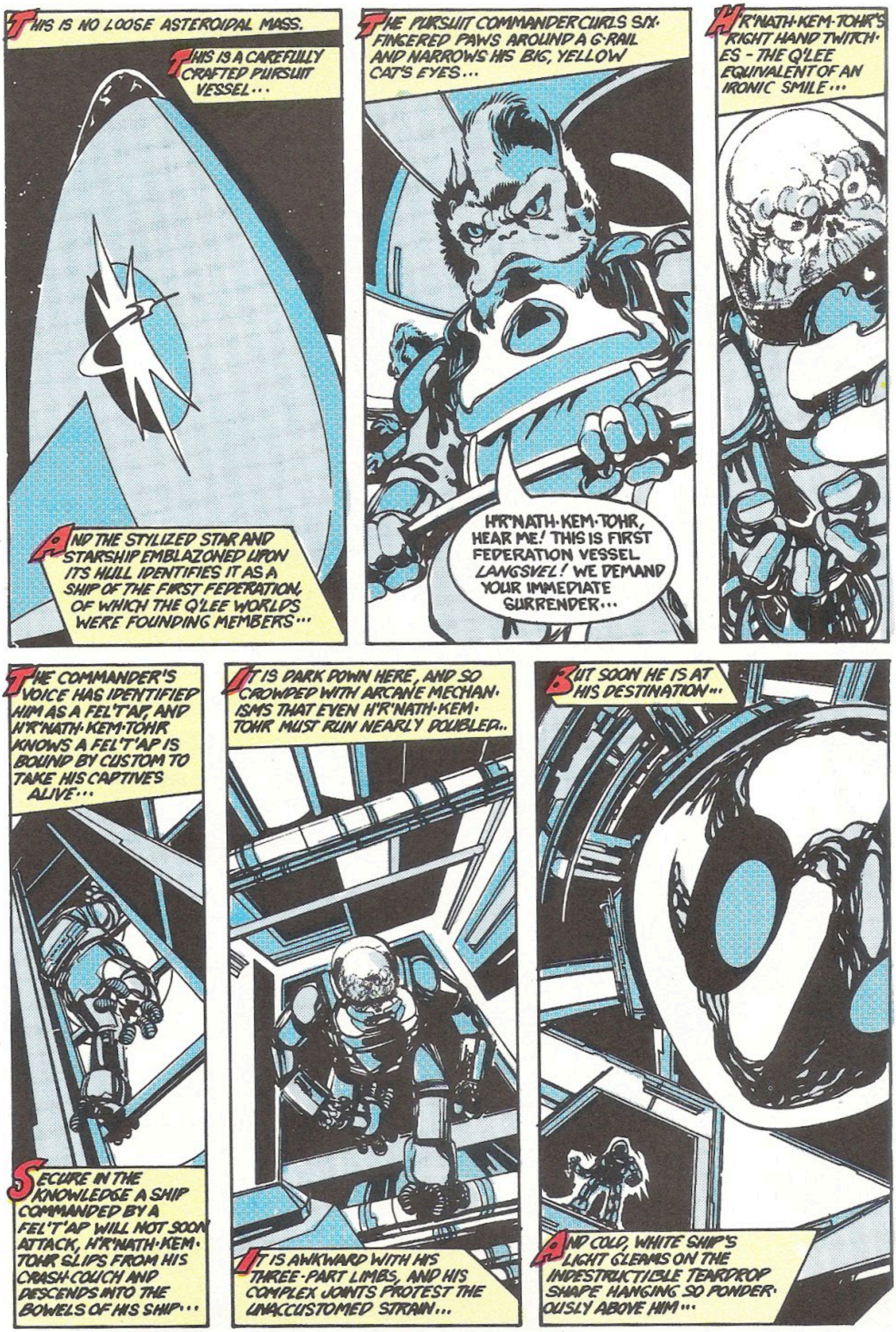
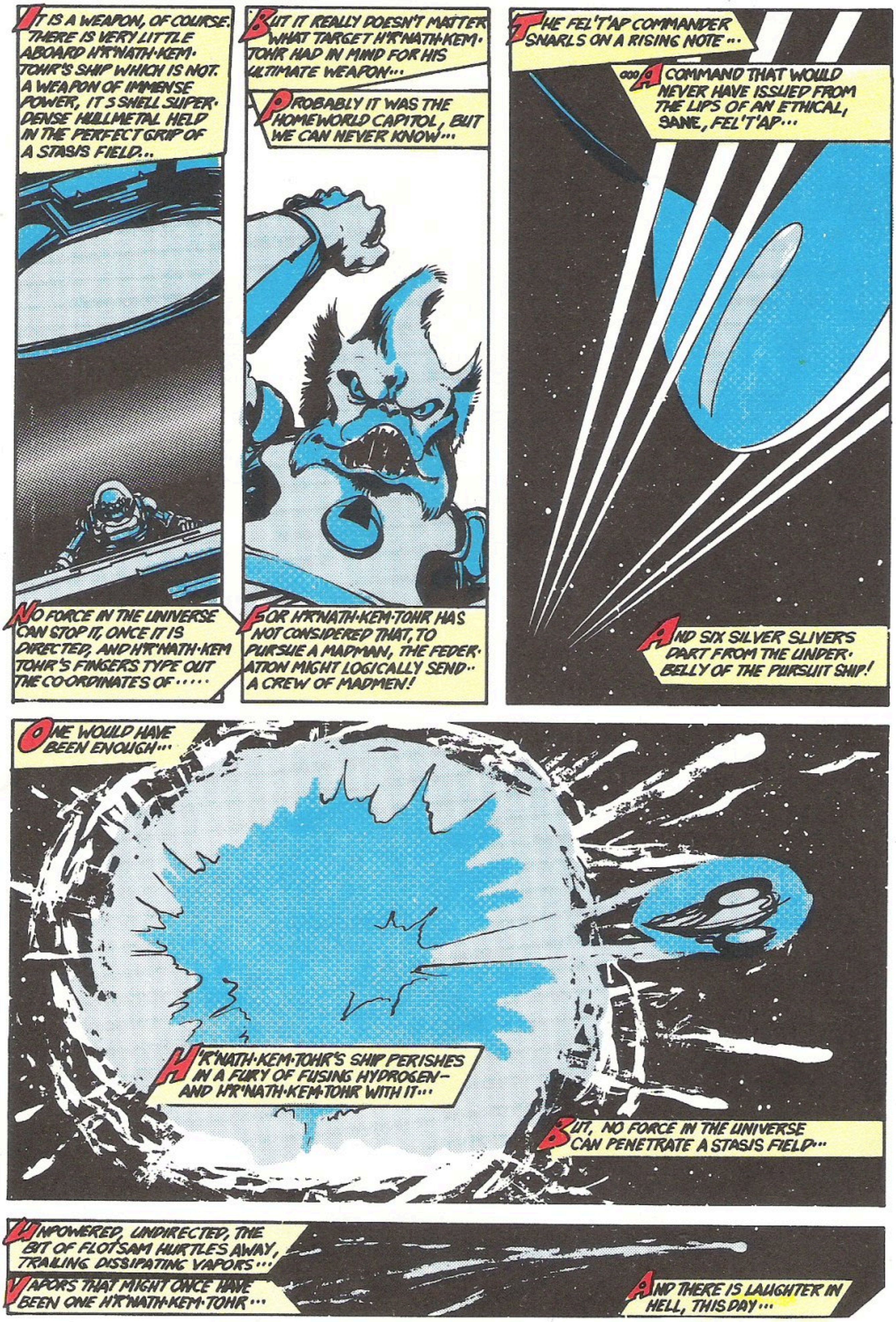
WORLD & WHITMAN

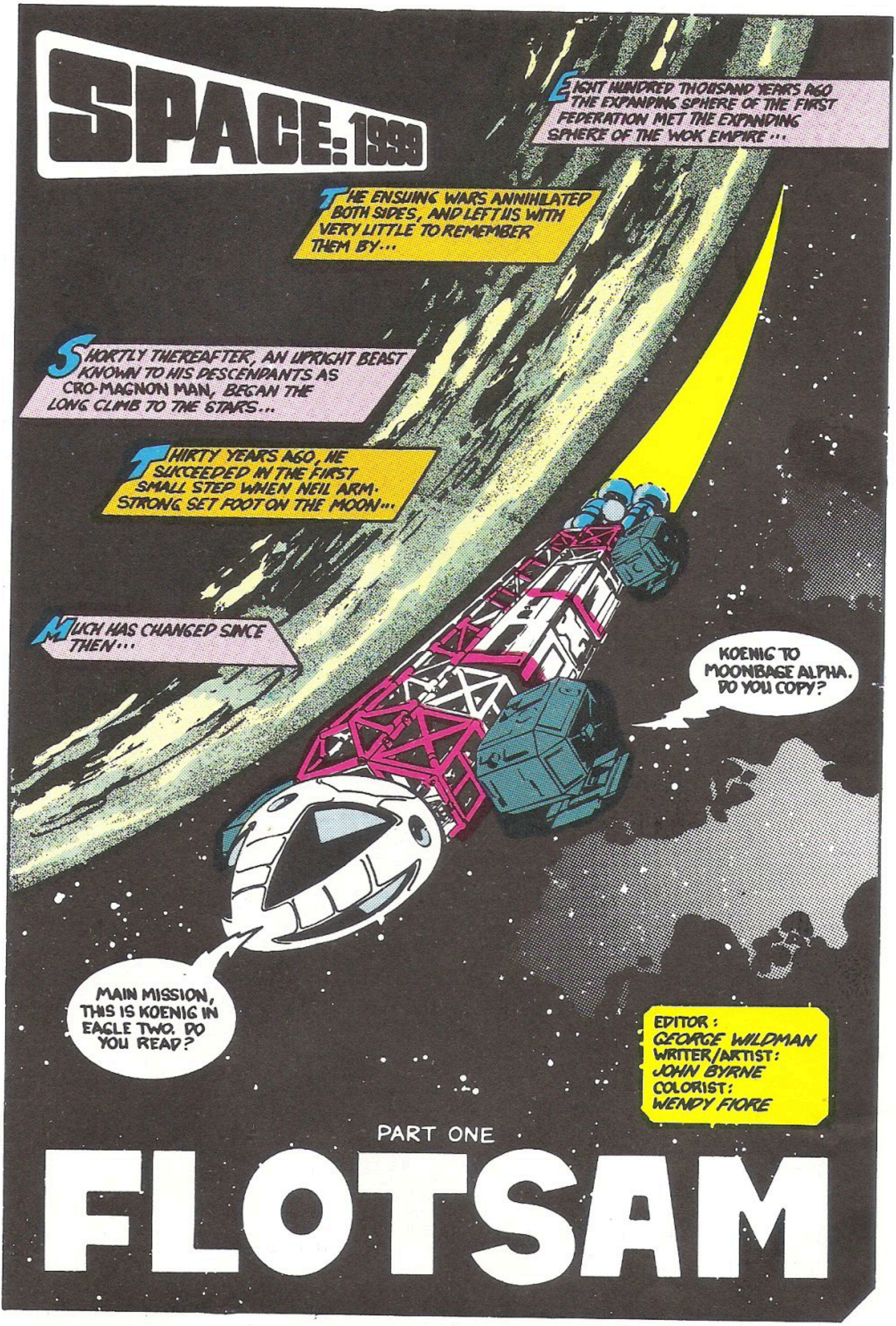
In the beginning . . .

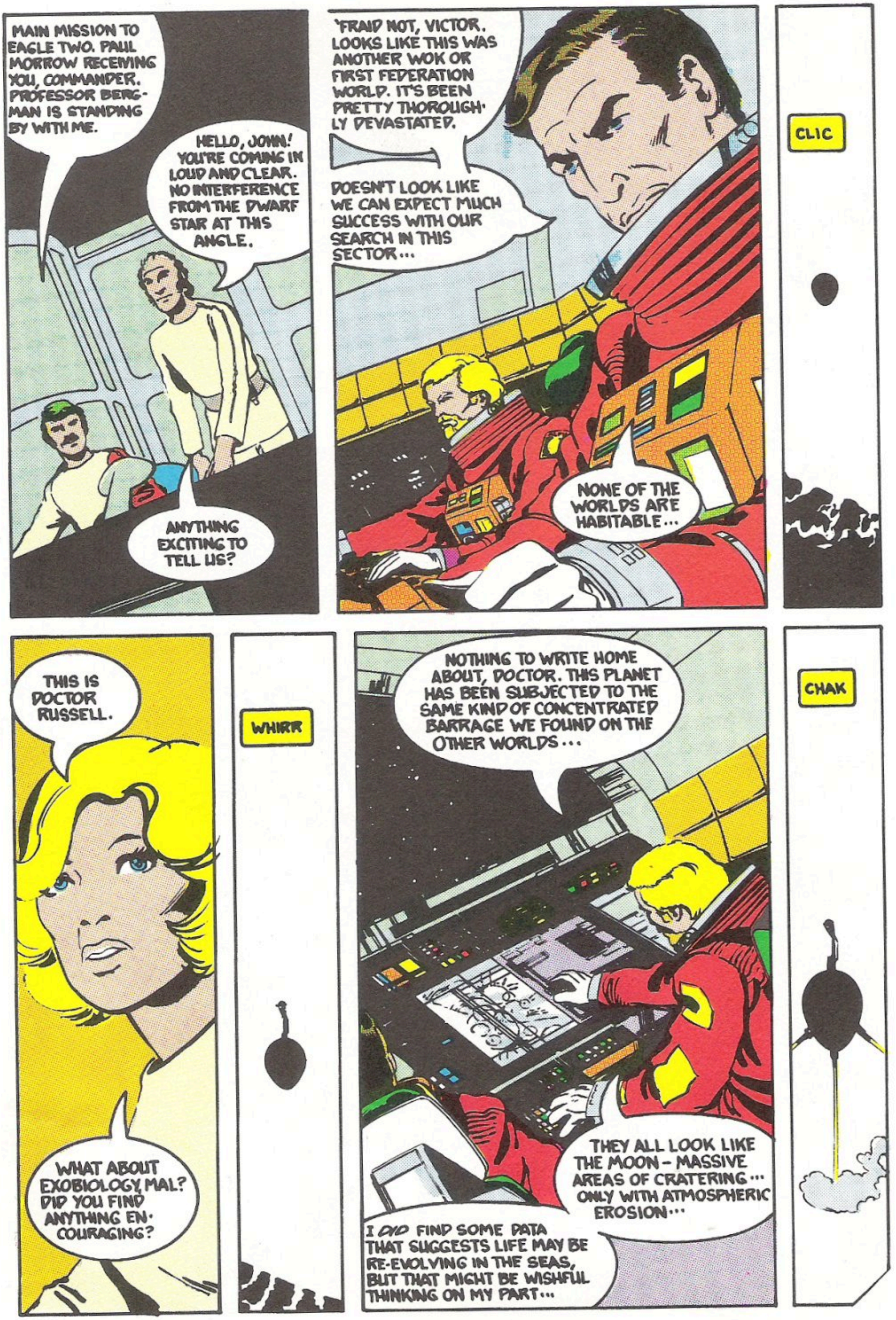

PROLOGUE:
BEHOLD THE FACE OF EVIL INCARNATE...
HIS NAME IS H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR, AND HE IS THE LAST OF THE Q'LEE ... A CONDITION OF HIS OWN ENGINEERING...
IT WAS SAID OF THE Q'LEE THAT THEY BORE ILL FEELINGS TOWARDS NONE, A TRADITION HONORED BY H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR MORE IN THE BREACH THAN IN THE OBSERVANCE. IT WAS THIS WHICH MADE HIM THE MOST DANGEROUS BEING IN THE GALAXY...
BUT, H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR WAS BORN, LIVED, AND ULTIMATELY PERISHED MORE THAN A MILLION YEARS AGO, SO WOULD BE NO THREAT TO 20TH CENTURY MAN...
EXCEPT FOR THE END RESULT OF THE ACTIONS OF THE LAST HOUR OF HIS LIFE...

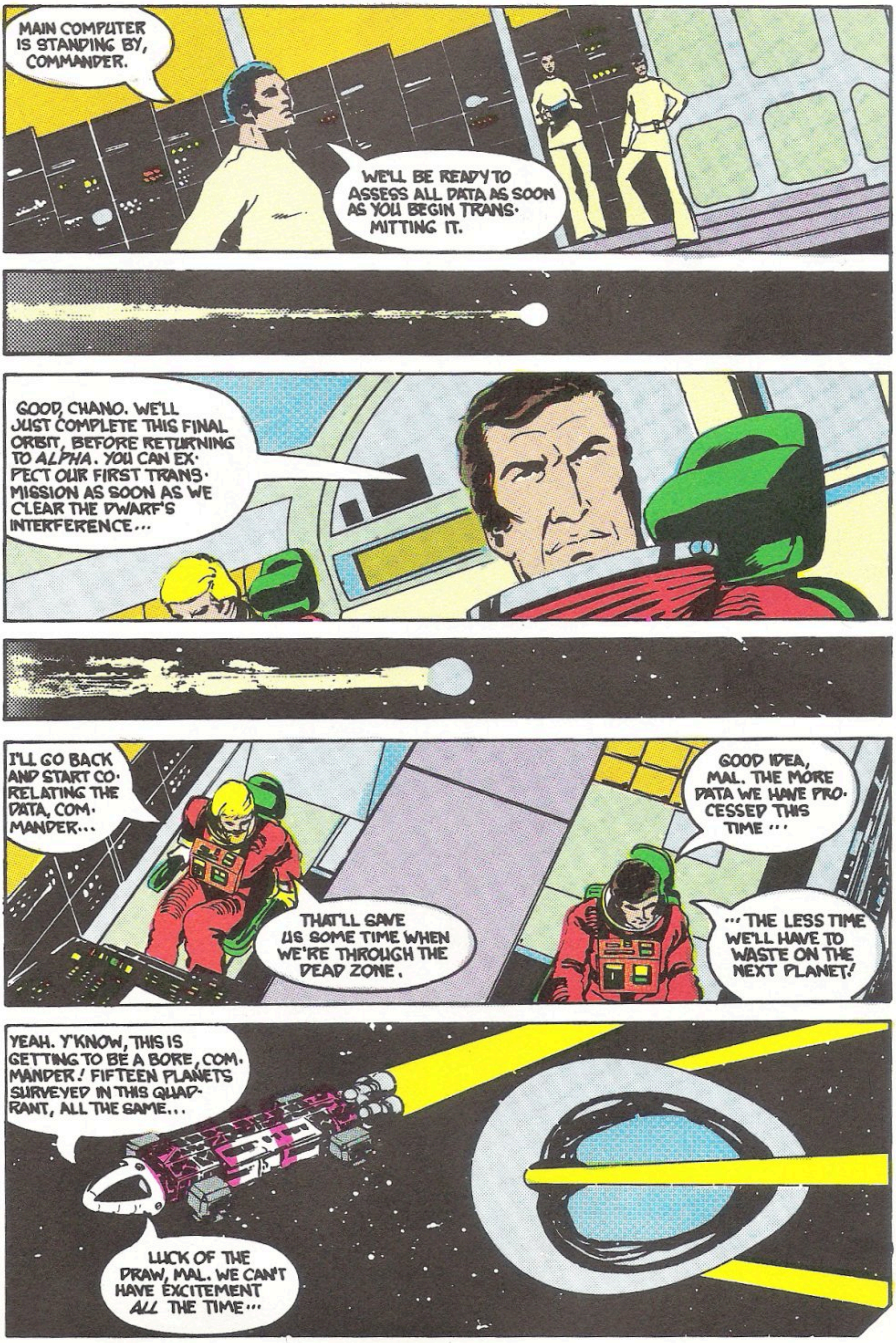

THE RACE OF THE Q'LEE WAS OLD WHEN OUR SUN WAS BORN, AND THEIR KNOWLEDGE WAS VAST...
PROBABLY FOR THIS REASON THE STARSHIP OF H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR WOULD LOOK UNGAINLY AND PRIMITIVE TO HUMAN EYES...
BUT IT HURTLES THROUGH THE VOID AT VELOCITIES MUCH IN EXCESS OF LIGHT·SPEED, AND IT S LINES ARE NOT SO MUCH PRIMITIVE, AS SIMPLE...
DECEPTIVELY SO...
FOR H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR'S SHIP IS A FLYING WEAPON...
AND HER MASTER SITS SECURE AT HER VERY CORE... SURROUNDED BY CHAOS BOUND TO HIS WILL...
HE REMEMBERS, AS THE SHIP PLUNGES THROUGH THE EMPTINESS...
H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR REMEMBERS THE DEATH·AGONY OF HIS RACE, THE SWEET TASTE OF TOTAL GENOCIDE...
HE REMEMBERS THE SURGES OF POWER BENEATH HIM AS HIS SHIP RAINED DESTRUCTION ACROSS THE WORLDS OF THE Q'LEE...
IT IS THE PERSISTENT BLINK· BLINK· BLINK OF A TELLTALE WARNING LIGHT THAT STIRS HIM....
THE EVER ALERT ASTEROID LOCATOR HAS DETECTED A SIZABLE MASS OF VALUABLE HULLMETAL NEARBY...
H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR TWISTS HIS SCANNER INTO FOCUS...
AND SNARLS AN OBSCENITY TOO VILE TO BE PRINTED EVEN IN HIS OWN LOST TONGUE...

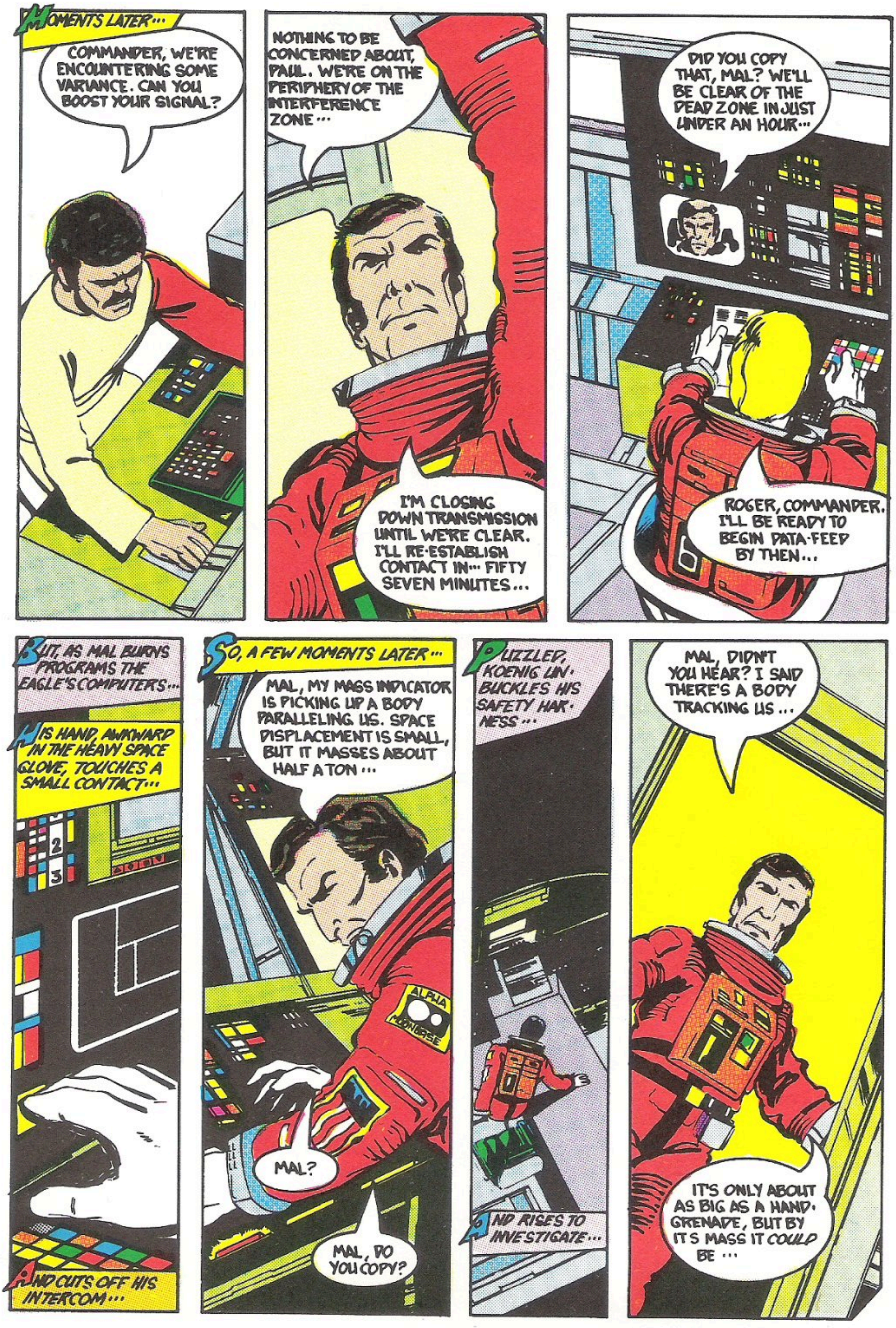

THIS IS NO LOOSE ASTEROIDAL MASS.
THIS IS A CAREFULLY CRAFTED PURSUIT VESSEL...
AND THE STYLIZED STAR AND STARSHIP EMBLAZONED UPON ITS HULL IDENTIFIES IT AS A SHIP OF THE FIRST FEDERATION, OF WHICH THE Q'LEE WORLDS WERE FOUNDING MEMBERS...
THE PURSUIT COMMANDER CURLS SIX-FINGERED PAWS AROUND A G-RAIL AND NARROWS HIS BIG, YELLOW CAT'S EYES...
H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR, HEAR ME! THIS IS FIRST FEDERATION VESSEL LANGSVEL! WE DEMAND YOUR IMMEDIATE SURRENDER...
H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR'S RIGHT HAND TWITCHES - THE Q'LEE EQUIVALENT OF AN IRONIC SMILE...
THE COMMANDER'S VOICE HAS IDENTIFIED HIM AS A FEL'T'AP, AND H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR KNOWS A FEL'T'AP IS BOUND BY CUSTOM TO TAKE HIS CAPTIVES ALIVE...
SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE A SHIP COMMANDED BY A FEL'T'AP WILL NOT SOON ATTACK, H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR SLIPS FROM HIS CRASH-COUCH AND DESCENDS INTO THE BOWELS OF HIS SHIP...
IT IS DARK DOWN HERE, AND SO CROWDED WITH ARCANE MECHANISMS THAT EVEN H'R'NATH-KEM-TOHR MUST RUN NEARLY DOUBLED..
IT IS AWKWARD WITH HIS THREE-PART LIMBS, AND HIS COMPLEX JOINTS PROTEST THE UNACCUSTOMED STRAIN...
BUT SOON HE IS AT HIS DESTINATION...
AND COLD, WHITE SHIP'S LIGHT GLEAMS ON THE INDESTRUCTIBLE TEARDROP SHAPE HANGING SO PONDEROUSLY ABOVE HIM...

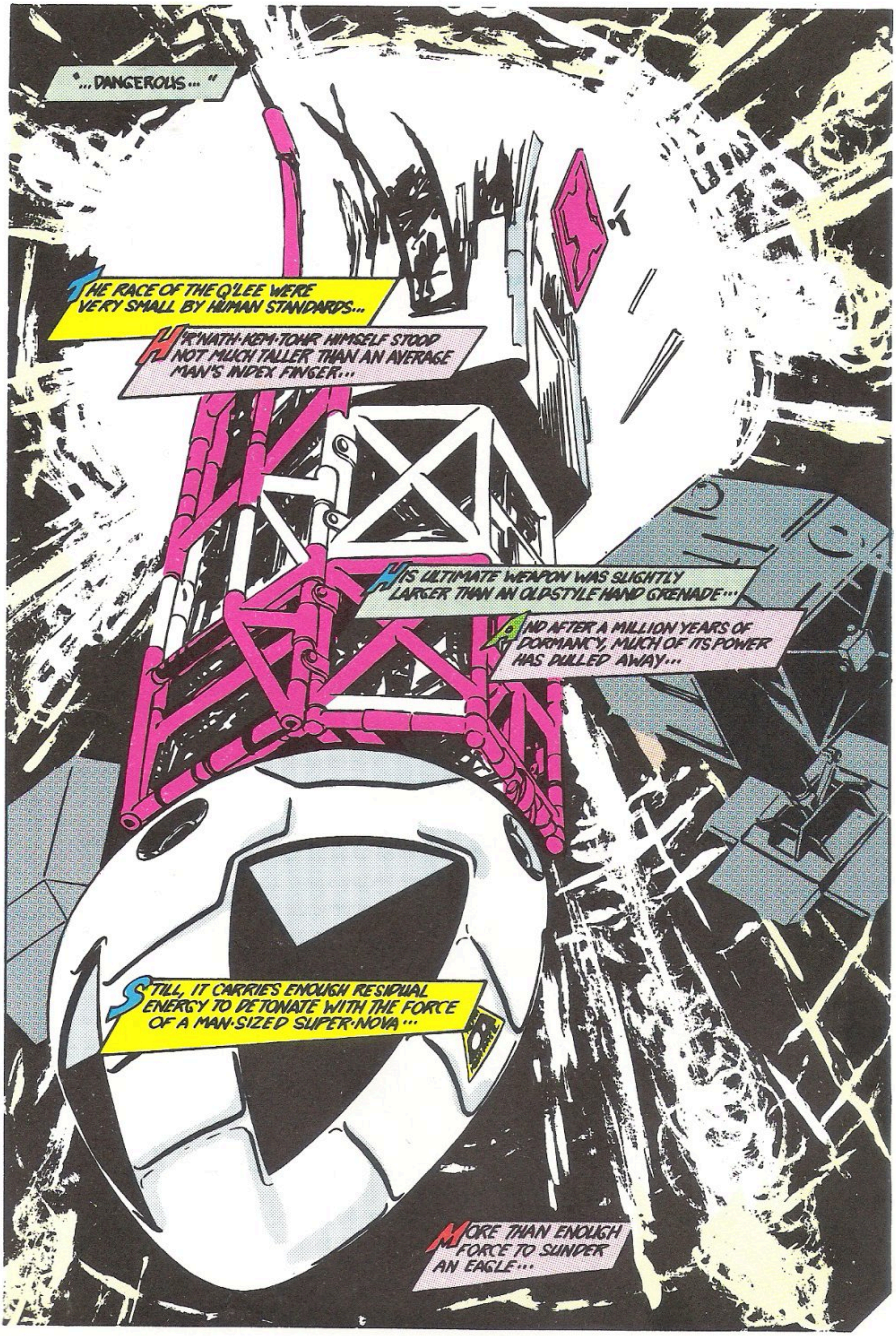

IT IS A WEAPON, OF COURSE: THERE IS VERY LITTLE ABOARD H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR'S SHIP WHICH IS NOT. A WEAPON OF IMMENSE POWER, ITS SHELL SUPER-DENSE HULLMETAL HELD IN THE PERFECT GRIP OF A STASIS FIELD...
BUT IT REALLY DOESN'T MATTER WHAT TARGET H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR HAD IN MIND FOR HIS ULTIMATE WEAPON...
PROBABLY IT WAS THE HOMEWORLD CAPITOL, BUT WE CAN NEVER KNOW...
NO FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE CAN STOP IT, ONCE IT IS DIRECTED, AND H'R'NATH·KEM TOHR'S FINGERS TYPE OUT THE CO-ORDINATES OF.....
FOR H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR HAS NOT CONSIDERED THAT, TO PURSUE A MADMAN, THE FEDERATION MIGHT LOGICALLY SEND.. A CREW OF MADMEN!
THE FEL'T'AP COMMANDER SNARLS ON A RISING NOTE...
...A COMMAND THAT WOULD NEVER HAVE ISSUED FROM THE LIPS OF AN ETHICAL, SANE, FEL'T'AP...
AND SIX SILVER SLIVERS DART FROM THE UNDERBELLY OF THE PURSUIT SHIP!
ONE WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH...
H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR'S SHIP PERISHES IN A FURY OF FUSING HYDROGEN— AND H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR WITH IT...
BUT, NO FORCE IN THE UNIVERSE CAN PENETRATE A STASIS FIELD...
UNPOWERED, UNDIRECTED, THE BIT OF FLOTSAM HURTLES AWAY, TRAILING DISSIPATING VAPORS...
VAPORS THAT MIGHT ONCE HAVE BEEN ONE H'R'NATH·KEM·TOHR...
AND THERE IS LAUGHTER IN HELL, THIS DAY...

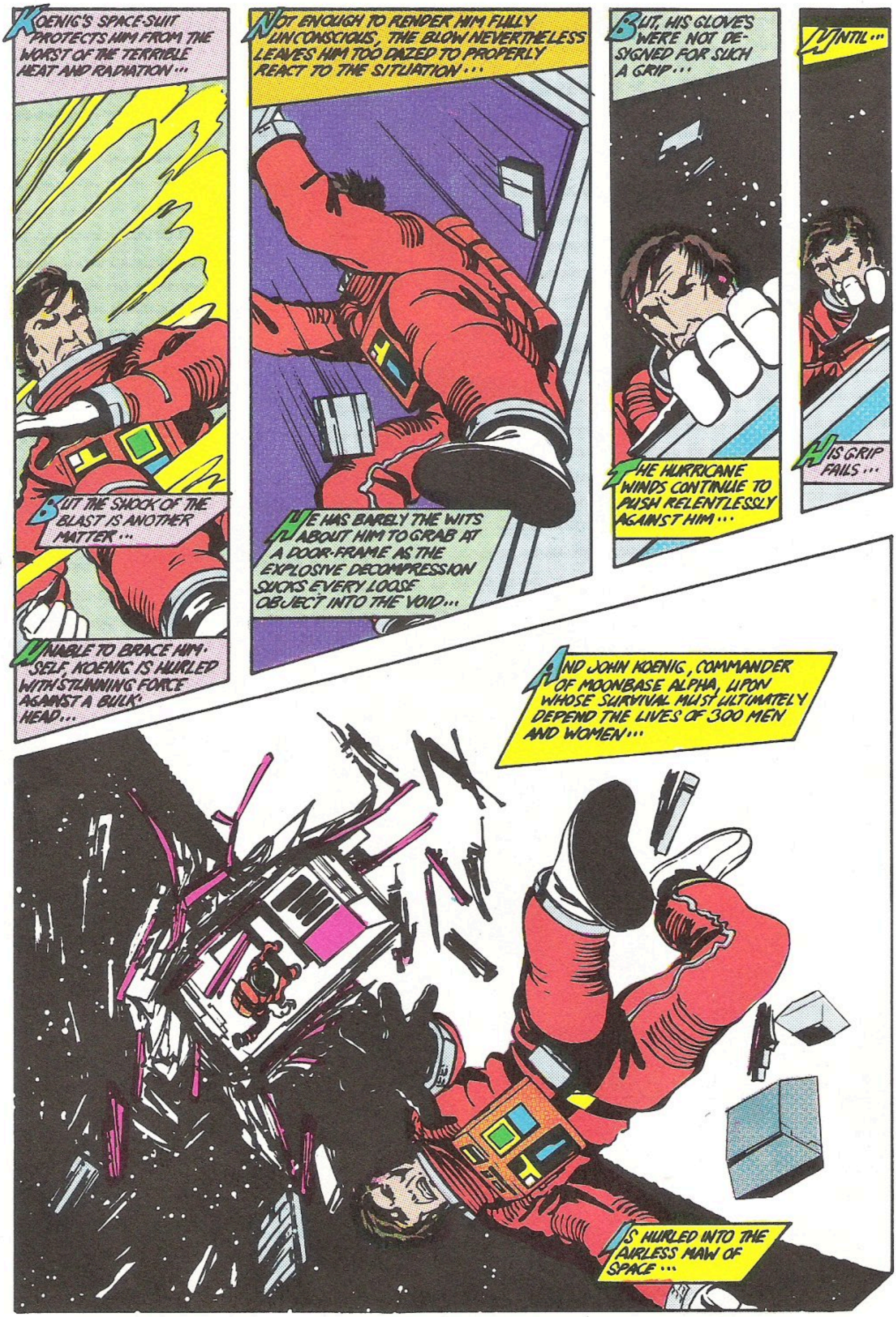

SPACE:1999
EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND YEARS AGO THE EXPANDING SPHERE OF THE FIRST FEDERATION MET THE EXPANDING SPHERE OF THE WOK EMPIRE...
THE ENSUING WARS ANNIHILATED BOTH SIDES, AND LEFT US WITH VERY LITTLE TO REMEMBER THEM BY...
SHORTLY THEREAFTER, AN UPRIGHT BEAST KNOWN TO HIS DESCENDANTS AS CRO-MAGNON MAN, BEGAN THE LONG CLIMB TO THE STARS...
THIRTY YEARS AGO, HE SUCCEEDED IN THE FIRST SMALL STEP WHEN NEIL ARMSTRONG SET FOOT ON THE MOON...
MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN...
KOENIG TO MOONBASE ALPHA. DO YOU COPY?
MAIN MISSION, THIS IS KOENIG IN EAGLE TWO. DO YOU READ?
EDITOR: GEORGE WILDMAN WRITER/ARTIST: JOHN BYRNE COLORIST: WENDY FIORE
PART ONE
FLOTSAM

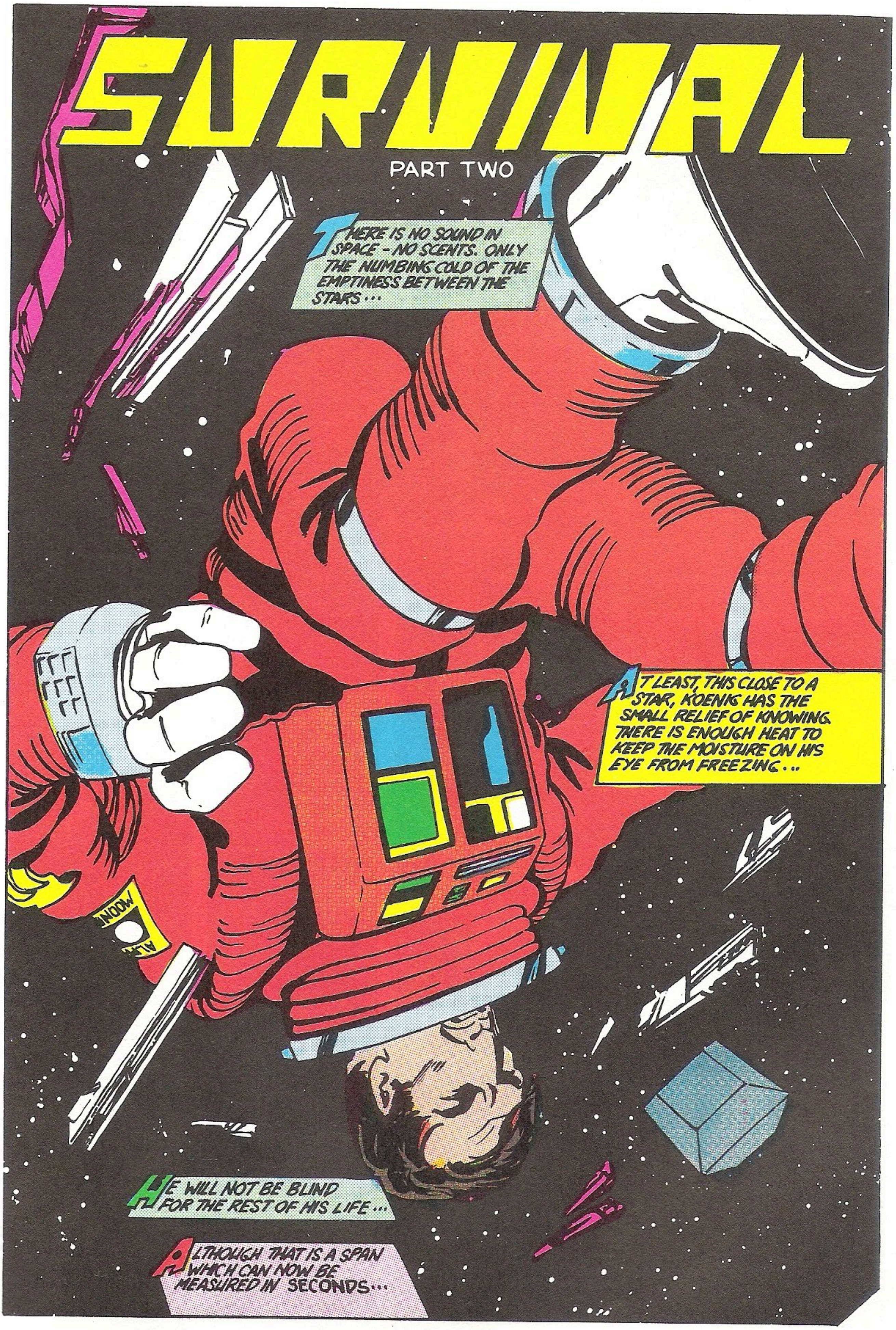

MAIN MISSION TO EAGLE TWO. PAUL MORROW RECEIVING YOU, COMMANDER. PROFESSOR BERGMAN IS STANDING BY WITH ME.
HELLO, JOHN! YOU'RE COMING IN LOUD AND CLEAR. NO INTERFERENCE FROM THE DWARF STAR AT THIS ANGLE.
ANYTHING EXCITING TO TELL US?
'FRAID NOT, VICTOR. LOOKS LIKE THIS WAS ANOTHER WOK OR FIRST FEDERATION WORLD. IT'S BEEN PRETTY THOROUGHLY DEVASTATED.
DOESN'T LOOK LIKE WE CAN EXPECT MUCH SUCCESS WITH OUR SEARCH IN THIS SECTOR...
NONE OF THE WORLDS ARE HABITABLE...
CLIC
THIS IS DOCTOR RUSSELL.
WHAT ABOUT EXOBIOLOGY, MAL? DID YOU FIND ANYTHING ENCOURAGING?
WHIRR
NOTHING TO WRITE HOME ABOUT, DOCTOR. THIS PLANET HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE SAME KIND OF CONCENTRATED BARRAGE WE FOUND ON THE OTHER WORLDS...
THEY ALL LOOK LIKE THE MOON – MASSIVE AREAS OF CRATERING... ONLY WITH ATMOSPHERIC EROSION...
I DID FIND SOME DATA THAT SUGGESTS LIFE MAY BE RE-EVOLVING IN THE SEAS, BUT THAT MIGHT BE WISHFUL THINKING ON MY PART...
CHAK

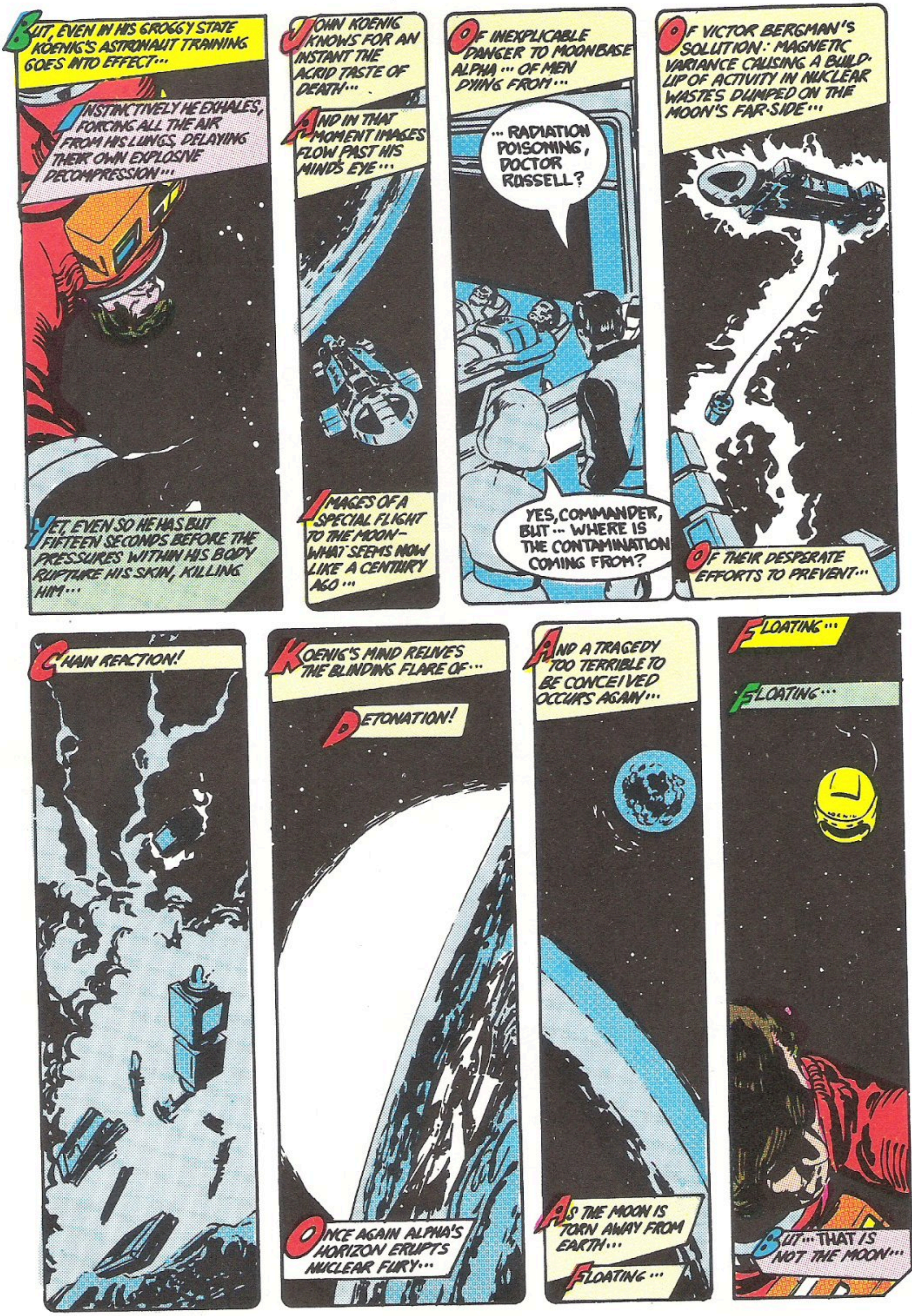

MAIN COMPUTER IS STANDING BY, COMMANDER.
WE'LL BE READY TO ASSESS ALL DATA AS SOON AS YOU BEGIN TRANSMITTING IT.
GOOD, CHANO. WE'LL JUST COMPLETE THIS FINAL ORBIT, BEFORE RETURNING TO *ALPHA*. YOU CAN EXPECT OUR FIRST TRANSMISSION AS SOON AS WE CLEAR THE DWARF'S INTERFERENCE...
I'LL GO BACK AND START CO-RELATING THE DATA, COMMANDER...
GOOD IDEA, MAL. THE MORE DATA WE HAVE PROCESSED THIS TIME ...
THAT'LL SAVE US SOME TIME WHEN WE'RE THROUGH THE DEAD ZONE.
... THE LESS TIME WE'LL HAVE TO WASTE ON THE NEXT PLANET!
YEAH. Y'KNOW, THIS IS GETTING TO BE A BORE, COMMANDER! FIFTEEN PLANETS SURVEYED IN THIS QUADRANT, ALL THE SAME...
LUCK OF THE DRAW, MAL. WE CAN'T HAVE EXCITEMENT *ALL* THE TIME...

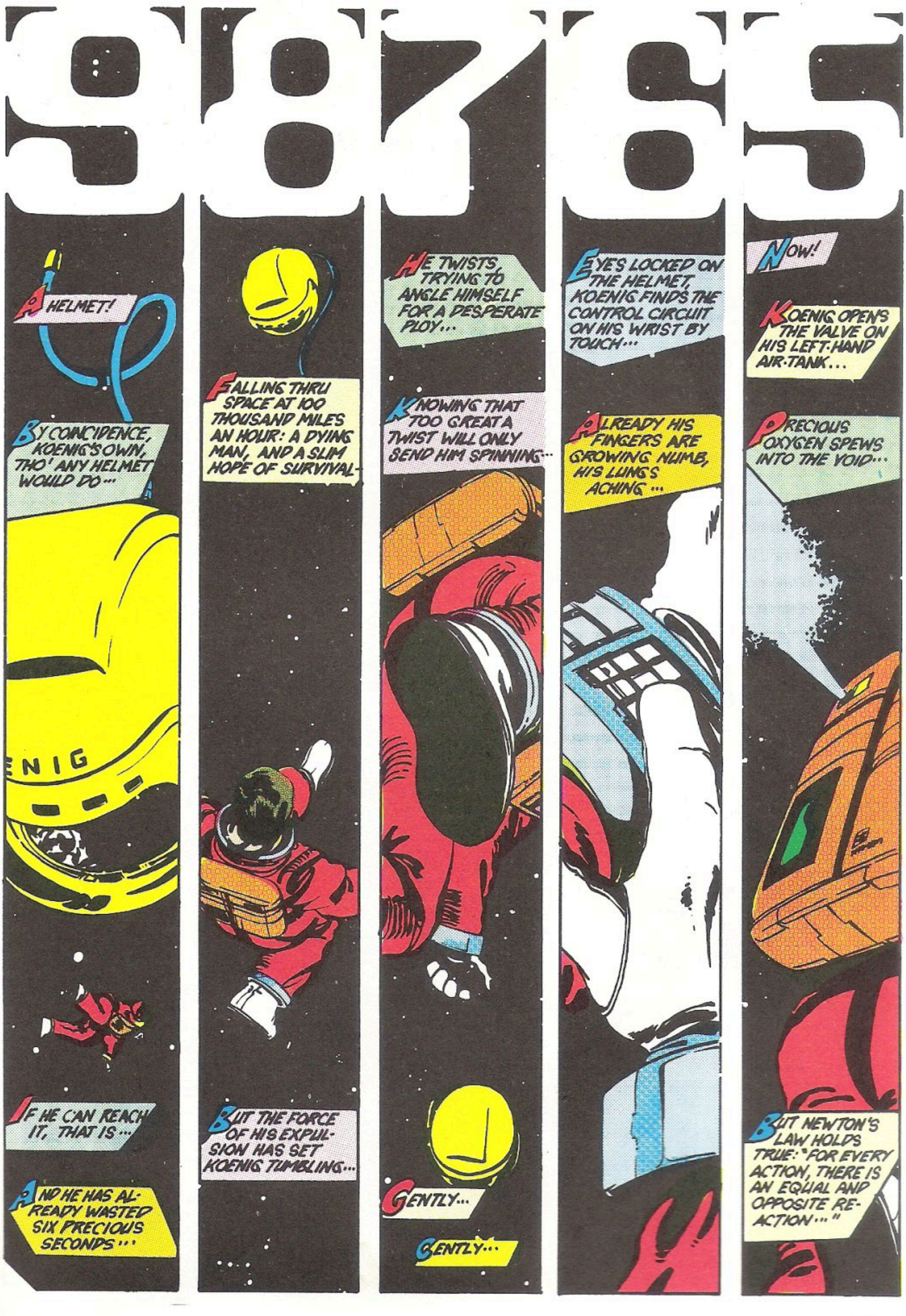

MOMENTS LATER...
COMMANDER, WE'RE ENCOUNTERING SOME VARIANCE. CAN YOU BOOST YOUR SIGNAL?
NOTHING TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT, PAUL. WE'RE ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE INTERFERENCE ZONE...
I'M CLOSING DOWN TRANSMISSION UNTIL WE'RE CLEAR. I'LL RE-ESTABLISH CONTACT IN... FIFTY SEVEN MINUTES...
DID YOU COPY THAT, MAL? WE'LL BE CLEAR OF THE DEAD ZONE IN JUST UNDER AN HOUR...
ROGER, COMMANDER. I'LL BE READY TO BEGIN DATA-FEED BY THEN...
BUT, AS MAL BURNS PROGRAMS THE EAGLE'S COMPUTERS...
HIS HAND, AWKWARD IN THE HEAVY SPACE GLOVE, TOUCHES A SMALL CONTACT...
AND CUTS OFF HIS INTERCOM...
SO, A FEW MOMENTS LATER...
MAL, MY MASS INDICATOR IS PICKING UP A BODY PARALLELING US. SPACE DISPLACEMENT IS SMALL, BUT IT MASSES ABOUT HALF A TON...
MAL?
MAL, DO YOU COPY?
PUZZLED, KOENIG UNBUCKLES HIS SAFETY HARNESS...
AND RISES TO INVESTIGATE...
MAL, DIDN'T YOU HEAR? I SAID THERE'S A BODY TRACKING US...
IT'S ONLY ABOUT AS BIG AS A HAND-GRENADE, BUT BY ITS MASS IT COULD BE...

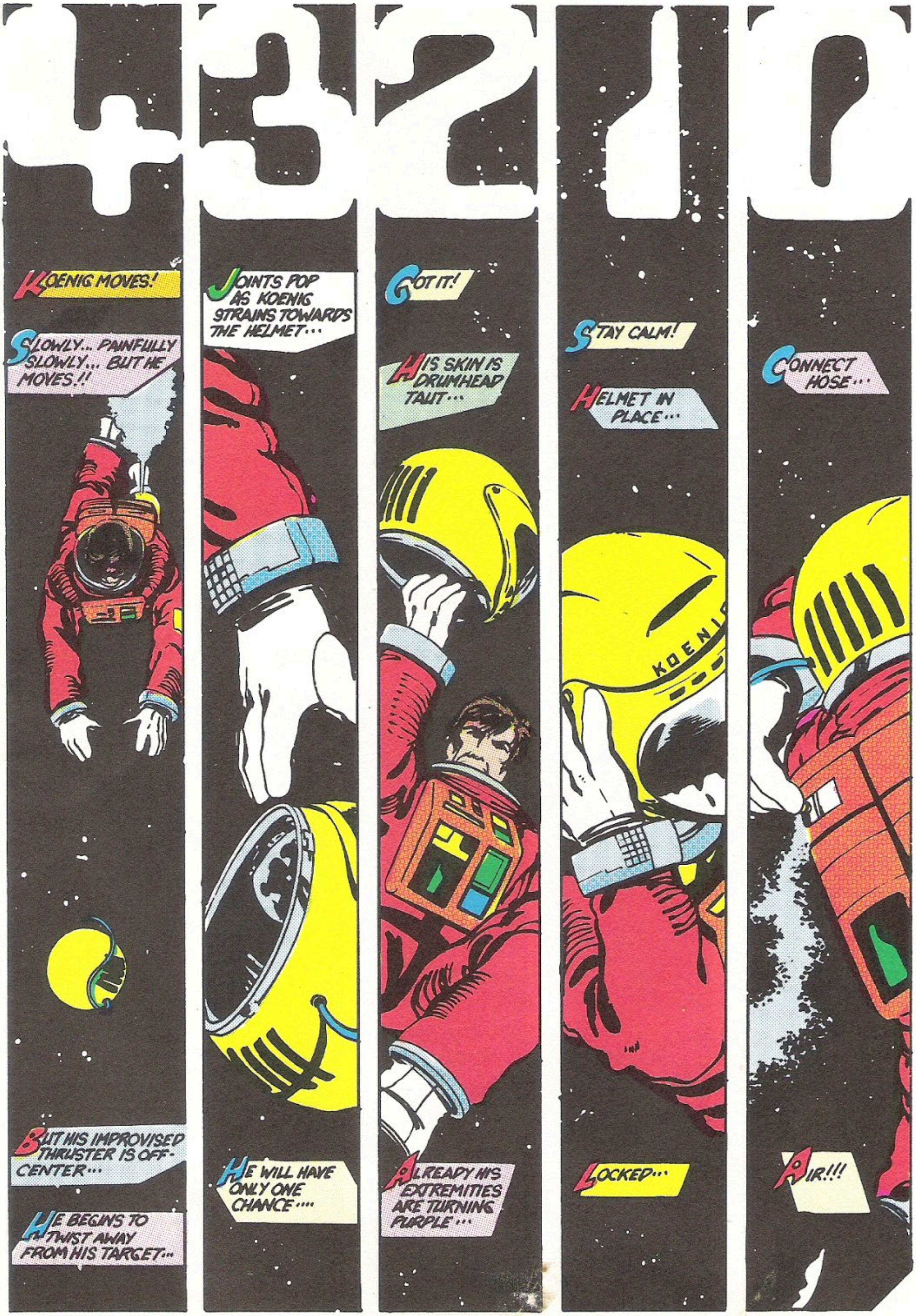

"...DANGEROUS..."
THE RACE OF THE Q'LEE WERE VERY SMALL BY HUMAN STANDARDS...
H'RNATH-KEM-TOHR HIMSELF STOOD NOT MUCH TALLER THAN AN AVERAGE MAN'S INDEX FINGER...
HIS ULTIMATE WEAPON WAS SLIGHTLY LARGER THAN AN OLDSTYLE HAND GRENADE...
AND AFTER A MILLION YEARS OF DORMANCY, MUCH OF ITS POWER HAS DULLED AWAY...
STILL, IT CARRIES ENOUGH RESIDUAL ENERGY TO DETONATE WITH THE FORCE OF A MAN-SIZED SUPER-NOVA...
MORE THAN ENOUGH FORCE TO SUNDER AN EAGLE...

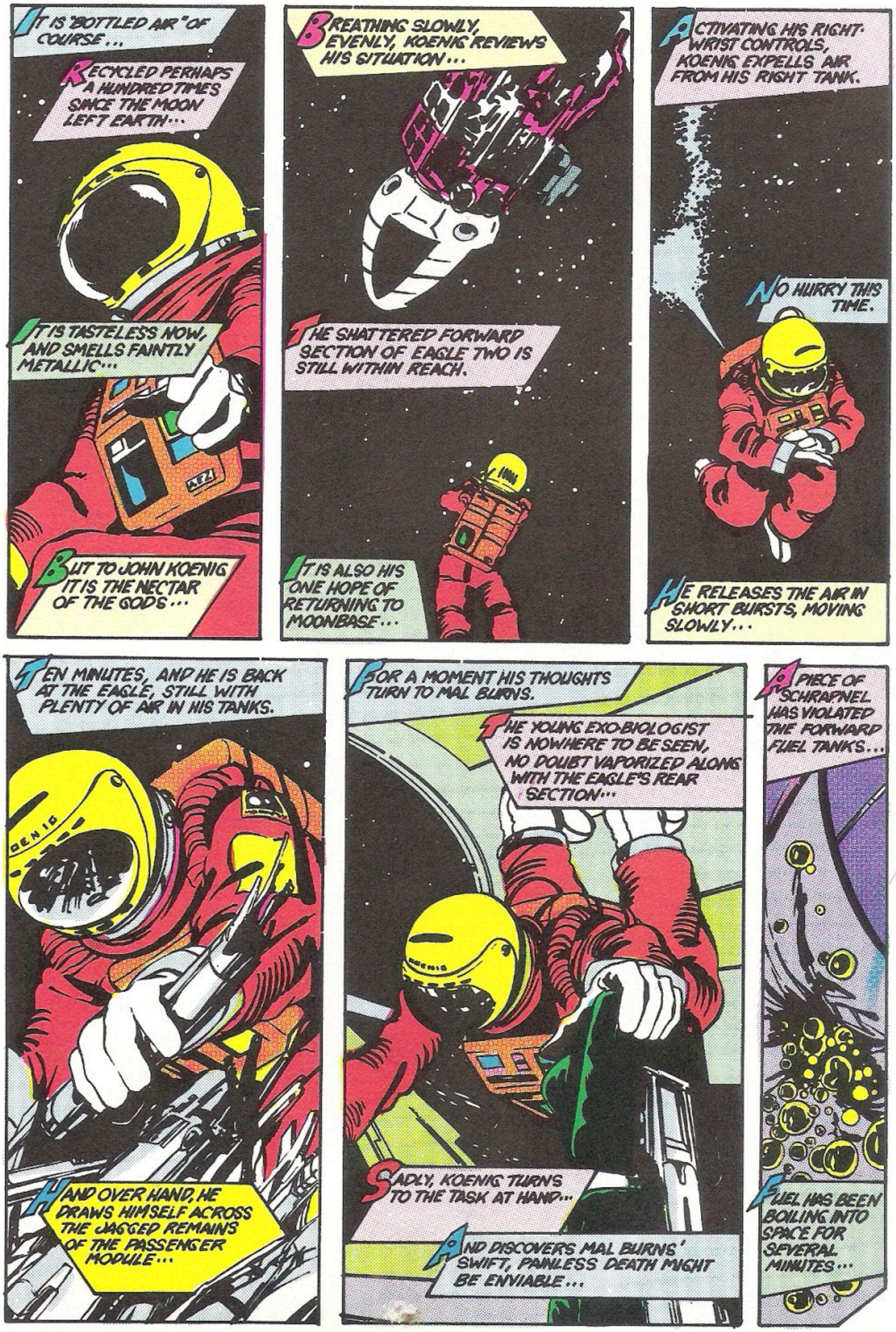

KOENIG'S SPACE-SUIT PROTECTS HIM FROM THE WORST OF THE TERRIBLE HEAT AND RADIATION...
BUT THE SHOCK OF THE BLAST IS ANOTHER MATTER...
UNABLE TO BRACE HIMSELF, KOENIG IS HURLED WITH STUNNING FORCE AGAINST A BULKHEAD...
NOT ENOUGH TO RENDER HIM FULLY UNCONSCIOUS, THE BLOW NEVERTHELESS LEAVES HIM TOO DAZED TO PROPERLY REACT TO THE SITUATION...
HE HAS BARELY THE WITS ABOUT HIM TO GRAB AT A DOOR-FRAME AS THE EXPLOSIVE DECOMPRESSION SUCKS EVERY LOOSE OBJECT INTO THE VOID...
BUT, HIS GLOVES WERE NOT DESIGNED FOR SUCH A GRIP...
THE HURRICANE WINDS CONTINUE TO PUSH RELENTLESSLY AGAINST HIM...
UNTIL...
HIS GRIP FAILS...
AND JOHN KOENIG, COMMANDER OF MOONBASE ALPHA, UPON WHOSE SURVIVAL MUST ULTIMATELY DEPEND THE LIVES OF 300 MEN AND WOMEN...
IS HURLED INTO THE AIRLESS MAW OF SPACE...

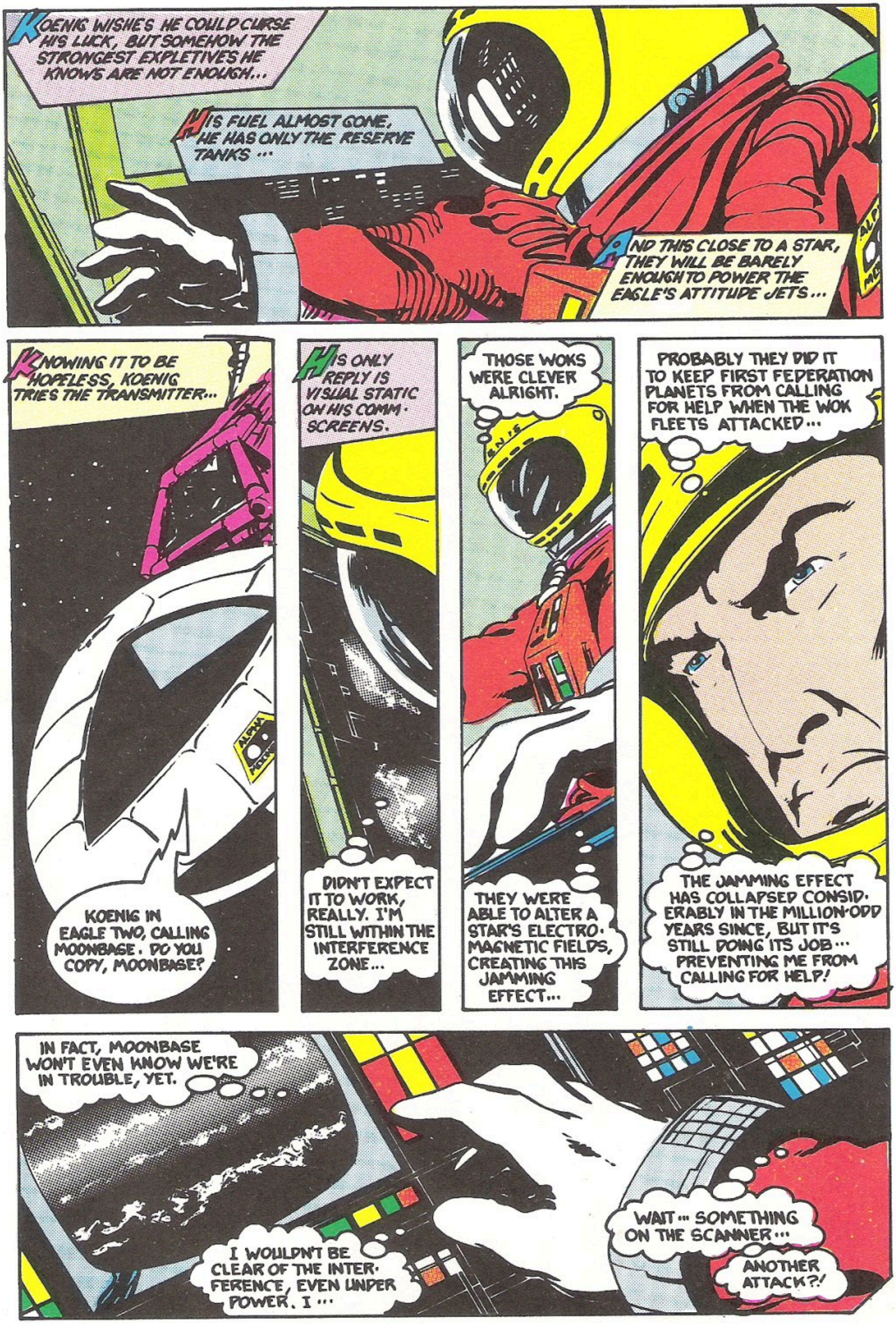

SURVIVAL
PART TWO
THERE IS NO SOUND IN SPACE - NO SCENTS. ONLY THE NUMBING COLD OF THE EMPTINESS BETWEEN THE STARS...
AT LEAST, THIS CLOSE TO A STAR, KOENIG HAS THE SMALL RELIEF OF KNOWING THERE IS ENOUGH HEAT TO KEEP THE MOISTURE ON HIS EYE FROM FREEZING...
HE WILL NOT BE BLIND FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE...
ALTHOUGH THAT IS A SPAN WHICH CAN NOW BE MEASURED IN SECONDS...

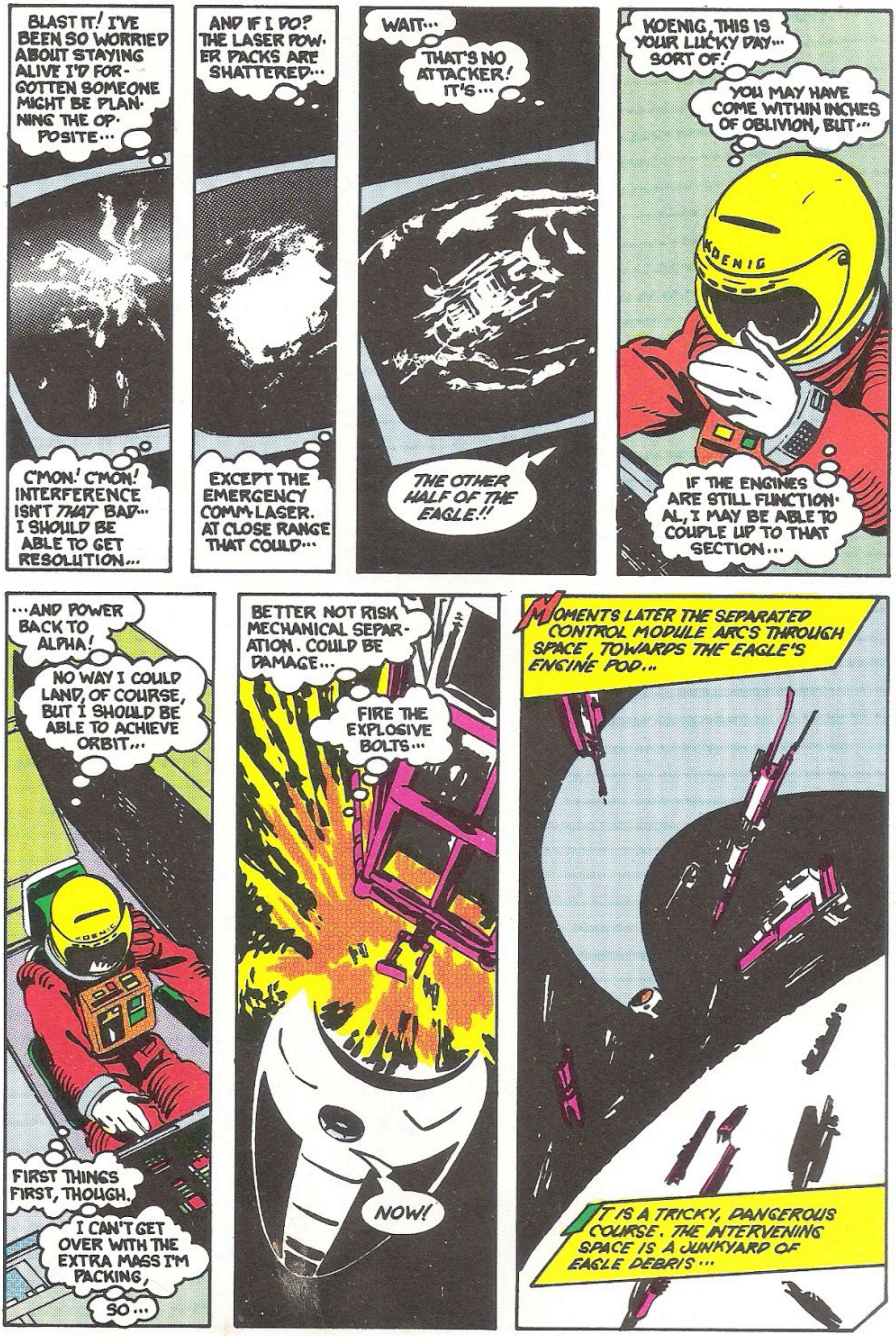

BUT, EVEN IN HIS GROGGY STATE KOENIG'S ASTRONAUT TRAINING GOES INTO EFFECT...
INSTINCTIVELY HE EXHALES, FORCING ALL THE AIR FROM HIS LUNGS, DELAYING THEIR OWN EXPLOSIVE DECOMPRESSION...
YET, EVEN SO HE HAS BUT FIFTEEN SECONDS BEFORE THE PRESSURES WITHIN HIS BODY RUPTURE HIS SKIN, KILLING HIM...
JOHN KOENIG KNOWS FOR AN INSTANT THE ACRID TASTE OF DEATH...
AND IN THAT MOMENT IMAGES FLOW PAST HIS MIND'S EYE...
IMAGES OF A SPECIAL FLIGHT TO THE MOON— WHAT SEEMS NOW LIKE A CENTURY AGO...
OF INEXPLICABLE DANGER TO MOONBASE ALPHA... OF MEN DYING FROM...
...RADIATION POISONING, DOCTOR RUSSELL?
YES, COMMANDER, BUT... WHERE IS THE CONTAMINATION COMING FROM?
OF VICTOR BERGMAN'S SOLUTION: MAGNETIC VARIANCE CAUSING A BUILD-UP OF ACTIVITY IN NUCLEAR WASTES DUMPED ON THE MOON'S FAR-SIDE...
OF THEIR DESPERATE EFFORTS TO PREVENT...
CHAIN REACTION!
KOENIG'S MIND RELIVES THE BLINDING FLARE OF...
DETONATION!
ONCE AGAIN ALPHA'S HORIZON ERUPTS NUCLEAR FURY...
AND A TRAGEDY TOO TERRIBLE TO BE CONCEIVED OCCURS AGAIN...
AS THE MOON IS TORN AWAY FROM EARTH...
FLOATING...
FLOATING...
FLOATING...
BUT... THAT IS NOT THE MOON...

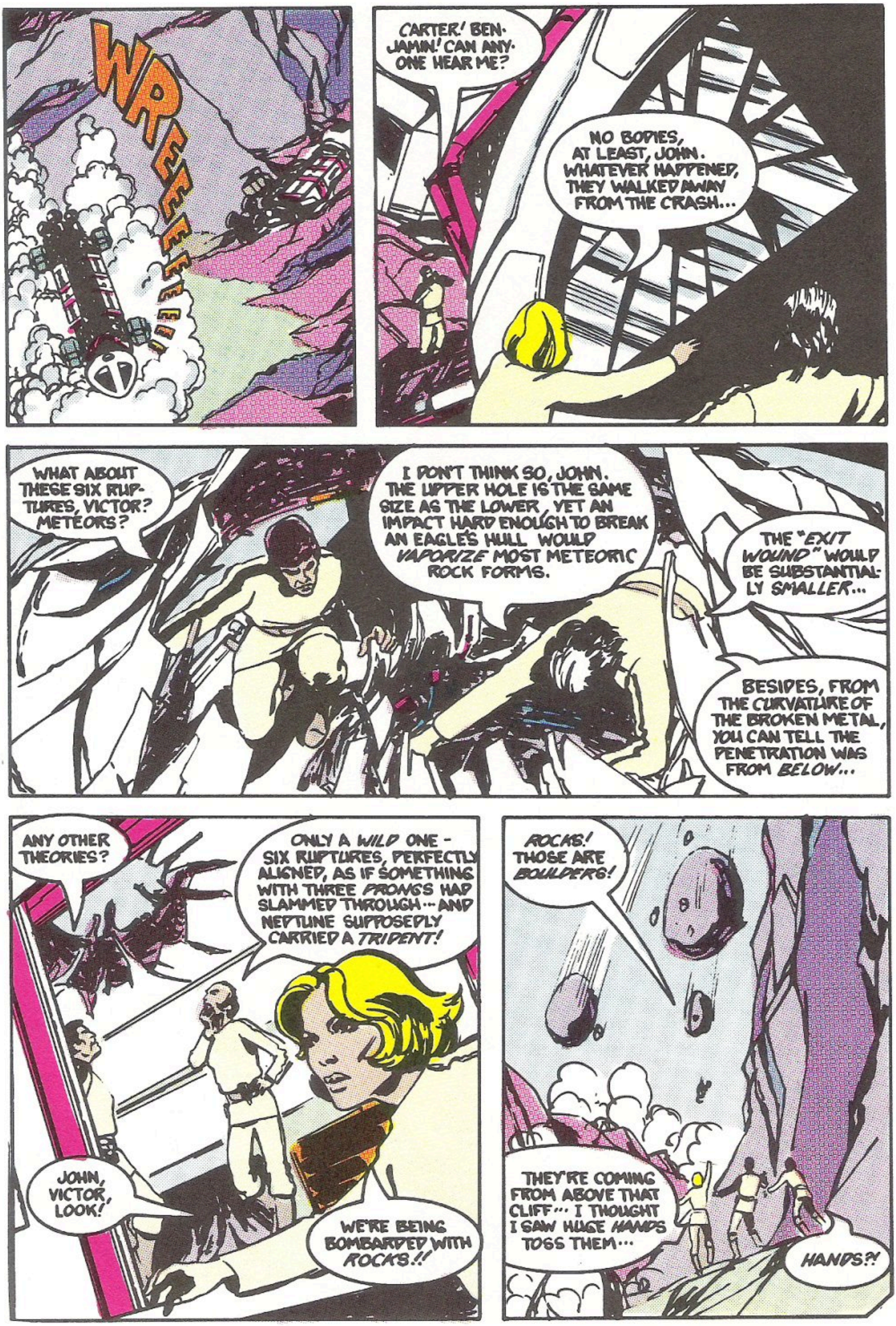

9
A HELMET!
BY CONCIDENCE, KOENIG'S OWN, THO' ANY HELMET WOULD DO···
ENIG
IF HE CAN REACH IT, THAT IS···
AND HE HAS ALREADY WASTED SIX PRECIOUS SECONDS···
8
FALLING THRU SPACE AT 100 THOUSAND MILES AN HOUR: A DYING MAN, AND A SLIM HOPE OF SURVIVAL–
BUT THE FORCE OF HIS EXPULSION HAS SET KOENIG TUMBLING···
7
HE TWISTS, TRYING TO ANGLE HIMSELF FOR A DESPERATE PLOY...
KNOWING THAT TOO GREAT A TWIST WILL ONLY SEND HIM SPINNING···
GENTLY...
GENTLY...
6
EYES LOCKED ON THE HELMET, KOENIG FINDS THE CONTROL CIRCUIT ON HIS WRIST BY TOUCH···
ALREADY HIS FINGERS ARE GROWING NUMB, HIS LUNGS ACHING···
5
NOW!
KOENIG OPENS THE VALVE ON HIS LEFT-HAND AIR-TANK...
PRECIOUS OXYGEN SPEWS INTO THE VOID···
BUT NEWTON'S LAW HOLDS TRUE: "FOR EVERY ACTION, THERE IS AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE REACTION···"

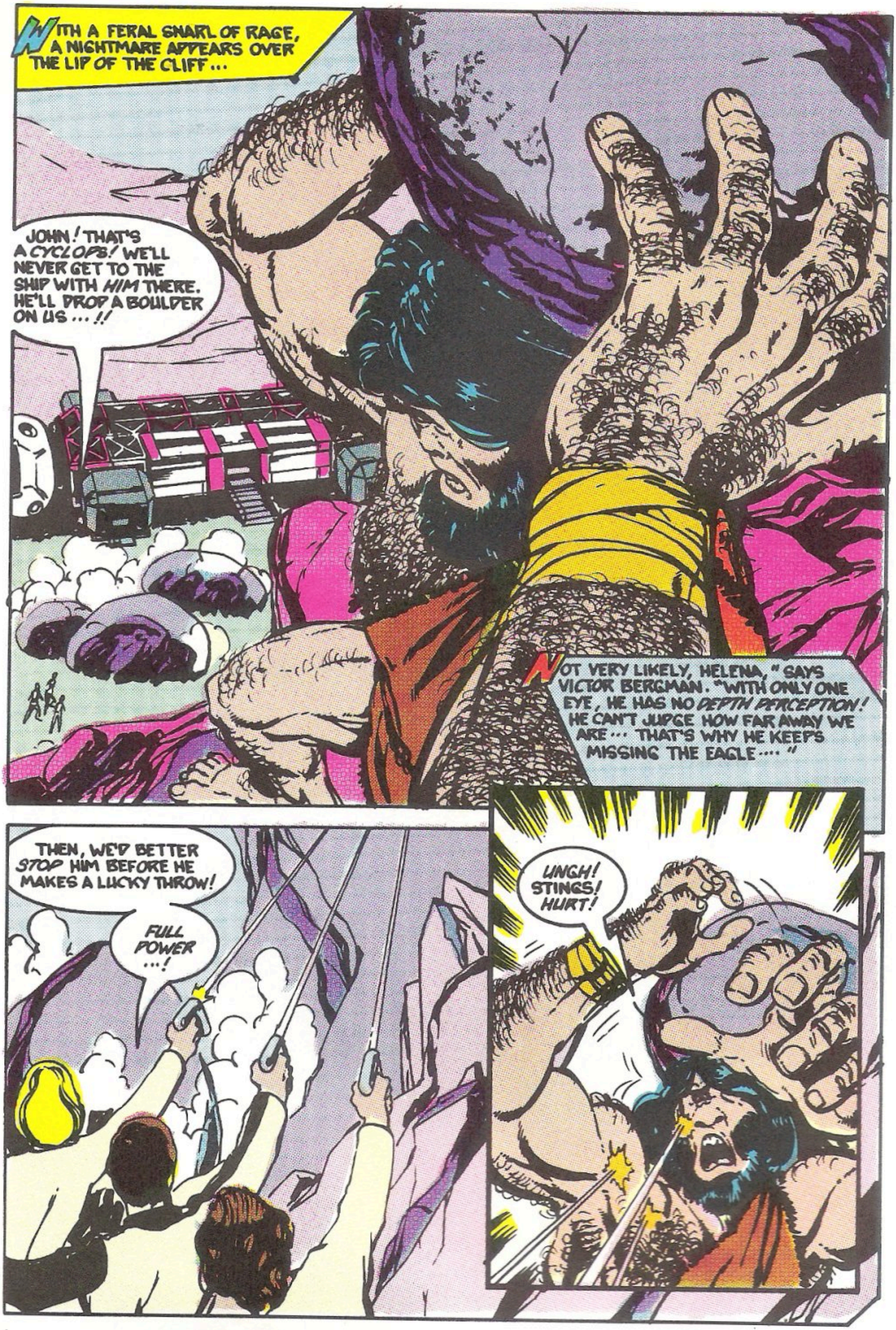

4 3 2 1 0
KOENIG MOVES!
SLOWLY... PAINFULLY SLOWLY... BUT HE MOVES!!
BUT HIS IMPROVISED THRUSTER IS OFF-CENTER...
HE BEGINS TO TWIST AWAY FROM HIS TARGET...
JOINTS POP AS KOENIG STRAINS TOWARDS THE HELMET...
HE WILL HAVE ONLY ONE CHANCE....
GOT IT!
HIS SKIN IS DRUMHEAD TAUT...
ALREADY HIS EXTREMITIES ARE TURNING PURPLE...
STAY CALM!
HELMET IN PLACE...
KOENIG
LOCKED...
CONNECT HOSE...
AIR!!!

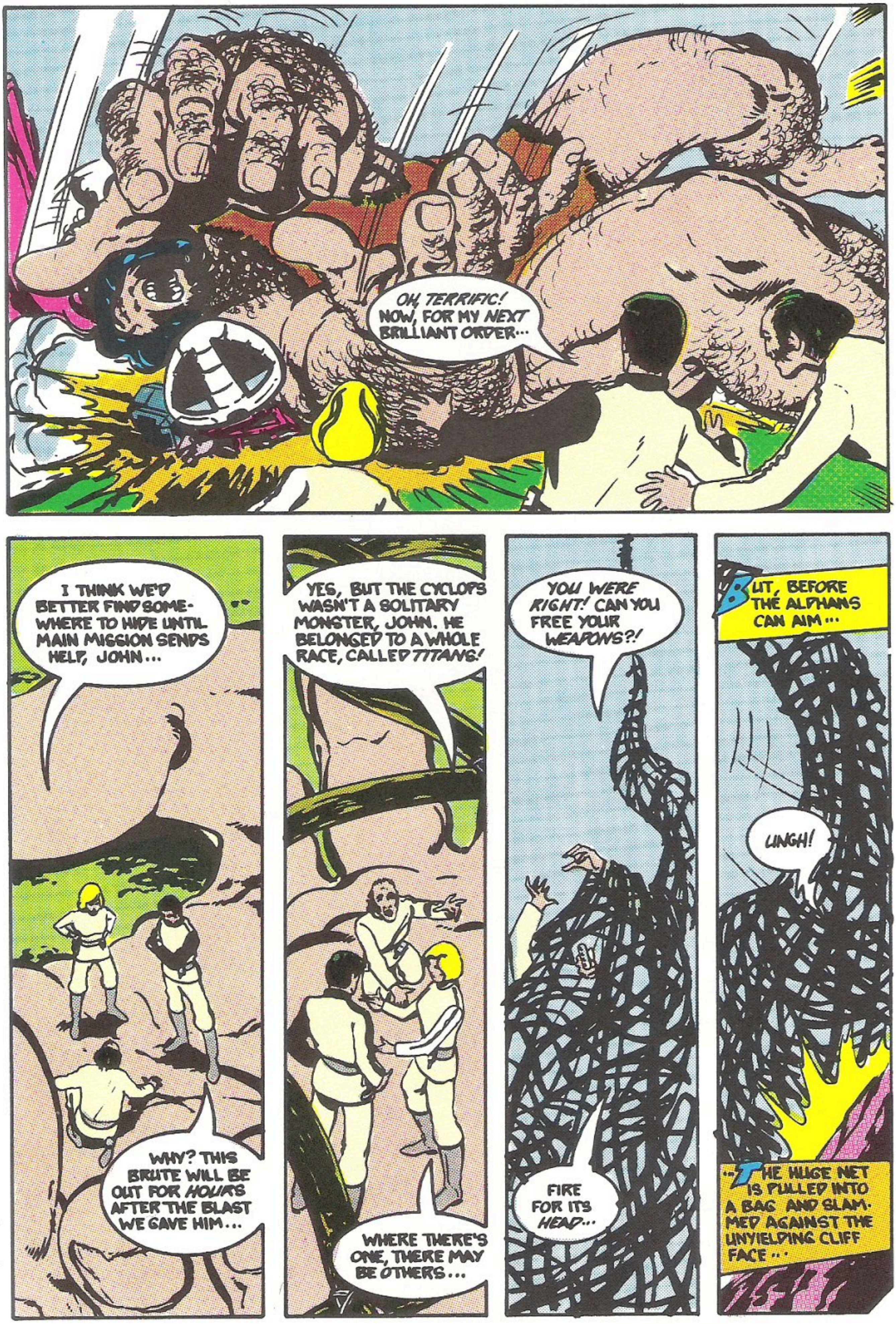

IT IS "BOTTLED AIR" OF COURSE...
RECYCLED PERHAPS A HUNDRED TIMES SINCE THE MOON LEFT EARTH...
IT IS TASTELESS NOW, AND SMELLS FAINTLY METALLIC...
BUT TO JOHN KOENIG IT IS THE NECTAR OF THE GODS...
BREATHING SLOWLY, EVENLY, KOENIG REVIEWS HIS SITUATION...
THE SHATTERED FORWARD SECTION OF EAGLE TWO IS STILL WITHIN REACH.
IT IS ALSO HIS ONE HOPE OF RETURNING TO MOONBASE...
ACTIVATING HIS RIGHT-WRIST CONTROLS, KOENIG EXPELLS AIR FROM HIS RIGHT TANK.
NO HURRY THIS TIME.
HE RELEASES THE AIR IN SHORT BURSTS, MOVING SLOWLY...
TEN MINUTES, AND HE IS BACK AT THE EAGLE, STILL WITH PLENTY OF AIR IN HIS TANKS.
KOENIG
HAND OVER HAND, HE DRAWS HIMSELF ACROSS THE JAGGED REMAINS OF THE PASSENGER MODULE...
FOR A MOMENT HIS THOUGHTS TURN TO MAL BURNS.
THE YOUNG EXO-BIOLOGIST IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN, NO DOUBT VAPORIZED ALONG WITH THE EAGLE'S REAR SECTION...
KOENIG
SADLY, KOENIG TURNS TO THE TASK AT HAND...
AND DISCOVERS MAL BURNS' SWIFT, PAINLESS DEATH MIGHT BE ENVIABLE...
A PIECE OF SCHRAPNEL HAS VIOLATED THE FORWARD FUEL TANKS...
FUEL HAS BEEN BOILING INTO SPACE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES...

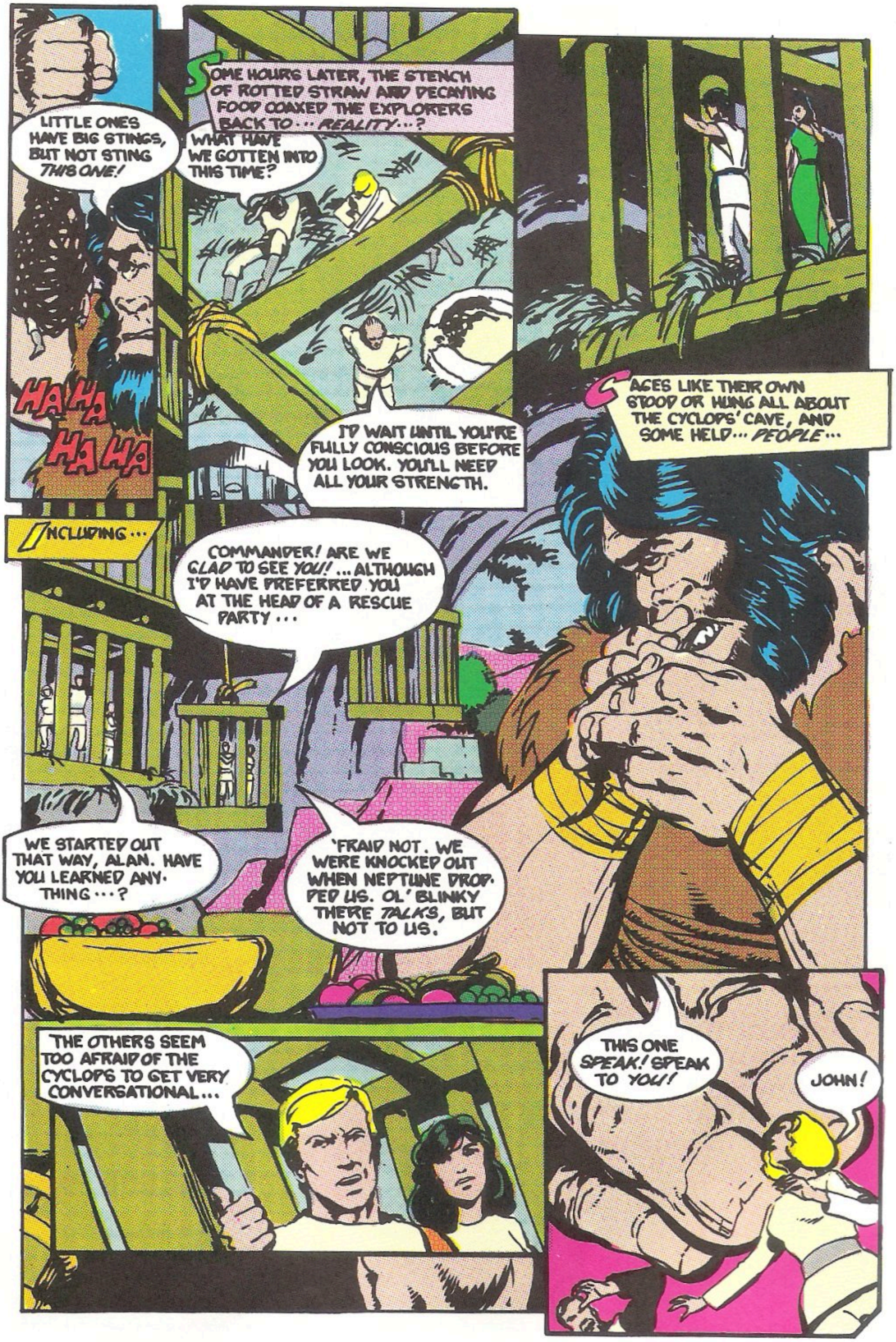

KOENIG WISHES HE COULD CURSE HIS LUCK, BUT SOMEHOW THE STRONGEST EXPLETIVES HE KNOWS ARE NOT ENOUGH...
HIS FUEL ALMOST GONE, HE HAS ONLY THE RESERVE TANKS ...
AND THIS CLOSE TO A STAR, THEY WILL BE BARELY ENOUGH TO POWER THE EAGLE'S ATTITUDE JETS...
KNOWING IT TO BE HOPELESS, KOENIG TRIES THE TRANSMITTER...
KOENIG IN EAGLE TWO, CALLING MOONBASE. DO YOU COPY, MOONBASE?
HIS ONLY REPLY IS VISUAL STATIC ON HIS COMM-SCREENS.
DIDN'T EXPECT IT TO WORK, REALLY. I'M STILL WITHIN THE INTERFERENCE ZONE...
THOSE WOKS WERE CLEVER ALRIGHT.
THEY WERE ABLE TO ALTER A STAR'S ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELDS, CREATING THIS JAMMING EFFECT...
PROBABLY THEY DID IT TO KEEP FIRST FEDERATION PLANETS FROM CALLING FOR HELP WHEN THE WOK FLEETS ATTACKED...
THE JAMMING EFFECT HAS COLLAPSED CONSIDERABLY IN THE MILLION-ODD YEARS SINCE, BUT IT'S STILL DOING ITS JOB... PREVENTING ME FROM CALLING FOR HELP!
IN FACT, MOONBASE WON'T EVEN KNOW WE'RE IN TROUBLE, YET.
I WOULDN'T BE CLEAR OF THE INTERFERENCE, EVEN UNDER POWER. I ...
WAIT... SOMETHING ON THE SCANNER...
ANOTHER ATTACK?!

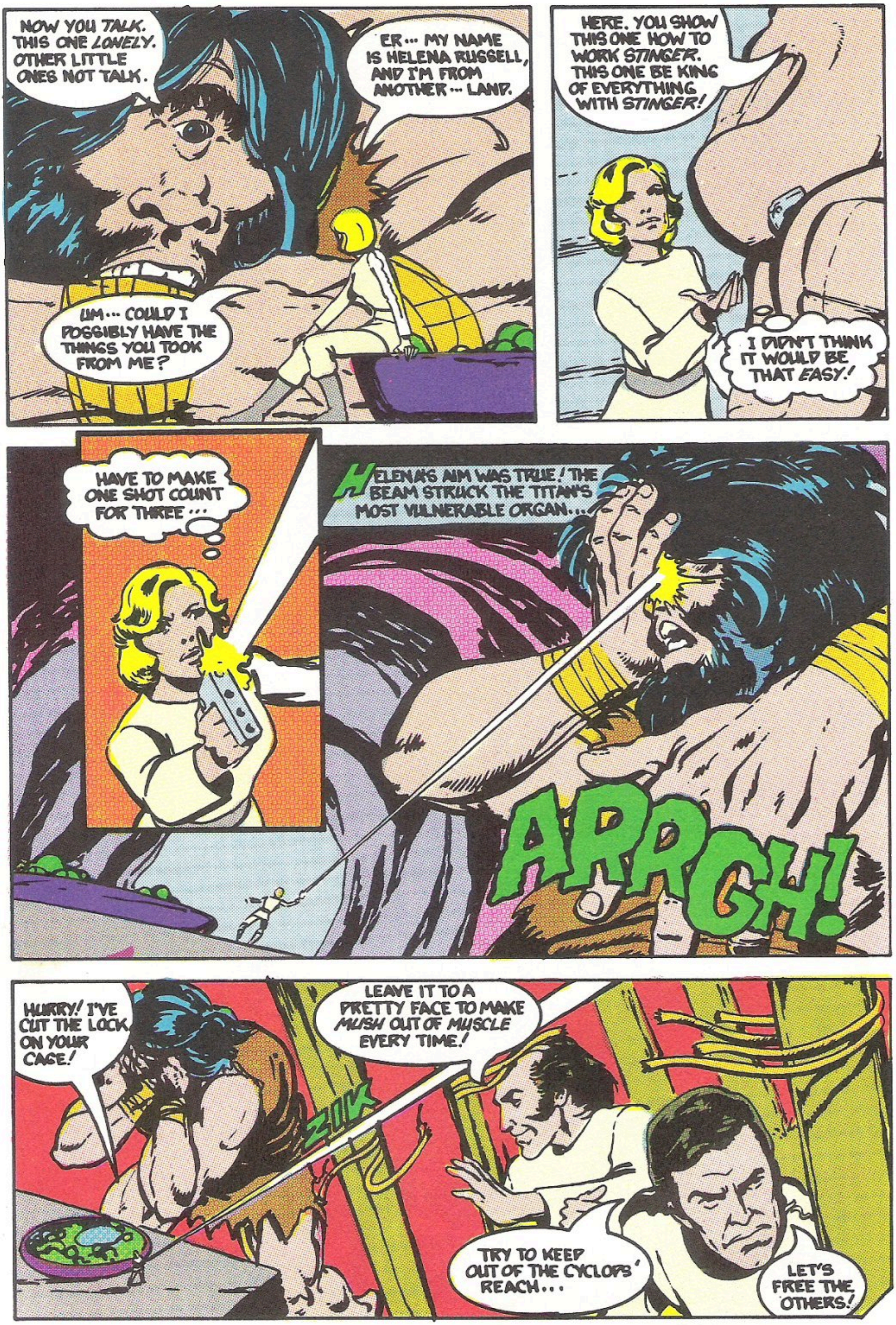

BLAST IT! I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT STAYING ALIVE I'D FORGOTTEN SOMEONE MIGHT BE PLANNING THE OPPOSITE...
C'MON! C'MON! INTERFERENCE ISN'T *THAT* BAD... I SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET RESOLUTION...
AND IF I DO? THE LASER POWER PACKS ARE SHATTERED...
EXCEPT THE EMERGENCY COMM-LASER. AT CLOSE RANGE THAT COULD...
WAIT...
THAT'S NO ATTACKER! IT'S...
THE OTHER HALF OF THE EAGLE!!
KOENIG, THIS IS YOUR LUCKY DAY... SORT OF!
YOU MAY HAVE COME WITHIN INCHES OF OBLIVION, BUT...
KOENIG
IF THE ENGINES ARE STILL FUNCTIONAL, I MAY BE ABLE TO COUPLE UP TO THAT SECTION...
...AND POWER BACK TO ALPHA!
NO WAY I COULD LAND, OF COURSE, BUT I SHOULD BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE ORBIT...
KOENIG
FIRST THINGS FIRST, THOUGH.
I CAN'T GET OVER WITH THE EXTRA MASS I'M PACKING,
SO...
BETTER NOT RISK MECHANICAL SEPARATION. COULD BE DAMAGE...
FIRE THE EXPLOSIVE BOLTS...
NOW!
MOMENTS LATER THE SEPARATED CONTROL MODULE ARCS THROUGH SPACE, TOWARDS THE EAGLE'S ENGINE POD...
IT IS A TRICKY, DANGEROUS COURSE. THE INTERVENING SPACE IS A JUNKYARD OF EAGLE DEBRIS...

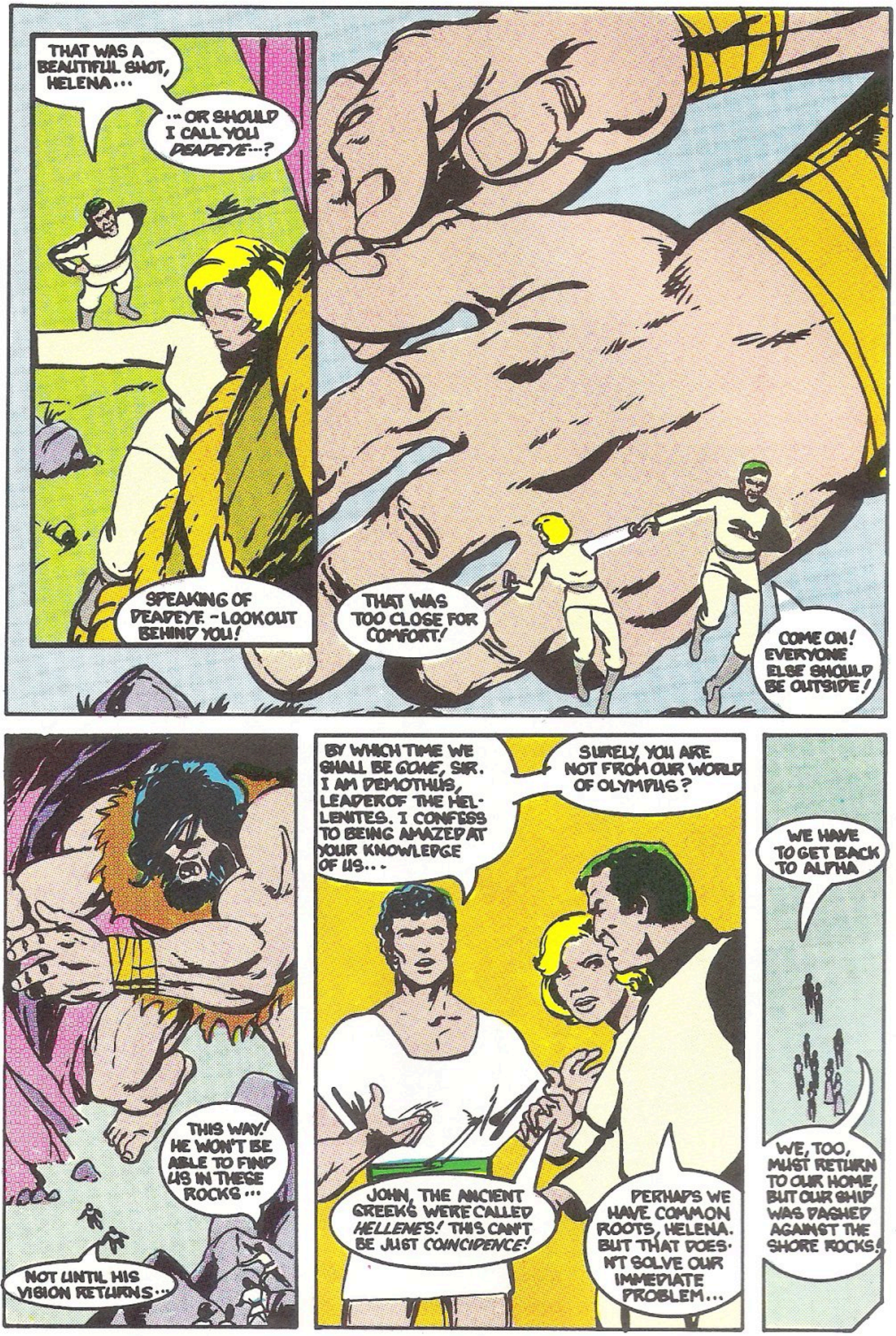

WREEEEEE
CARTER! BEN-JAMIN! CAN ANY-ONE HEAR ME?
NO BODIES, AT LEAST, JOHN. WHATEVER HAPPENED, THEY WALKED AWAY FROM THE CRASH...
WHAT ABOUT THESE SIX RUPTURES, VICTOR? METEORS?
I DON'T THINK SO, JOHN. THE UPPER HOLE IS THE SAME SIZE AS THE LOWER, YET AN IMPACT HARD ENOUGH TO BREAK AN EAGLE'S HULL WOULD *VAPORIZE* MOST METEORIC ROCK FORMS.
THE "*EXIT WOUND*" WOULD BE SUBSTANTIALLY *SMALLER*...
BESIDES, FROM THE *CURVATURE* OF THE BROKEN METAL, YOU CAN TELL THE PENETRATION WAS FROM *BELOW*...
ANY OTHER THEORIES?
ONLY A *WILD* ONE - SIX RUPTURES, PERFECTLY ALIGNED, AS IF SOMETHING WITH THREE *PRONGS* HAD SLAMMED THROUGH... AND NEPTUNE SUPPOSEDLY CARRIED A *TRIDENT*!
JOHN, VICTOR, LOOK!
WE'RE BEING BOMBARDED WITH *ROCKS*!!
ROCKS! THOSE ARE *BOULDERS*!
THEY'RE COMING FROM ABOVE THAT CLIFF... I THOUGHT I SAW HUGE *HANDS* TOSS THEM...
HANDS?!

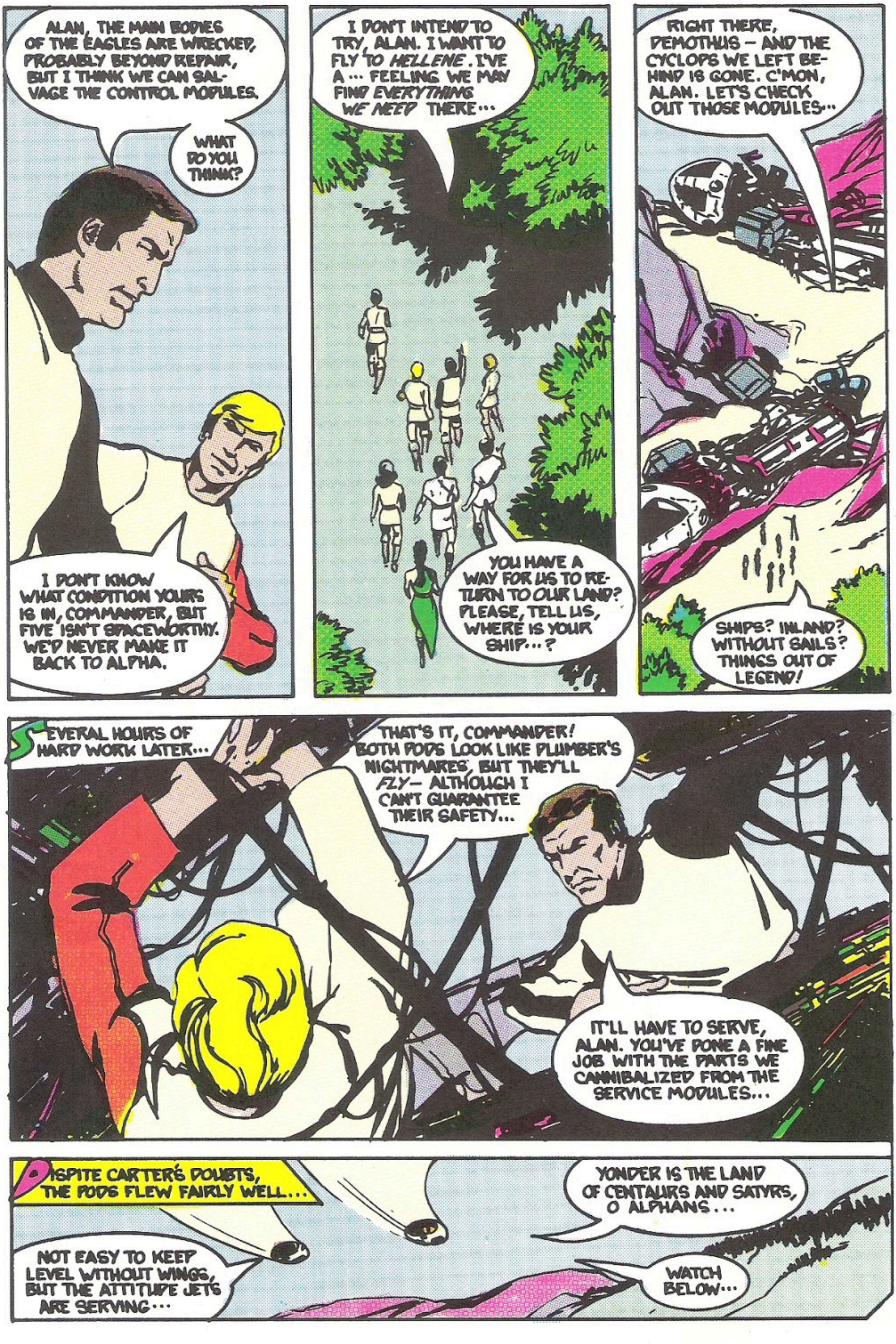

WITH A FERAL SNARL OF RAGE, A NIGHTMARE APPEARS OVER THE LIP OF THE CLIFF...
JOHN! THAT'S A *CYCLOPS!* WE'LL NEVER GET TO THE SHIP WITH *HIM* THERE. HE'LL DROP A BOULDER ON US...!!
"NOT VERY LIKELY, HELENA," SAYS VICTOR BERGMAN. "WITH ONLY ONE EYE, HE HAS NO *DEPTH PERCEPTION!* HE CAN'T JUDGE HOW FAR AWAY WE ARE... THAT'S WHY HE KEEPS MISSING THE EAGLE...."
THEN, WE'D BETTER *STOP* HIM BEFORE HE MAKES A LUCKY THROW!
FULL POWER...!
UNGH! STINGS! HURT!

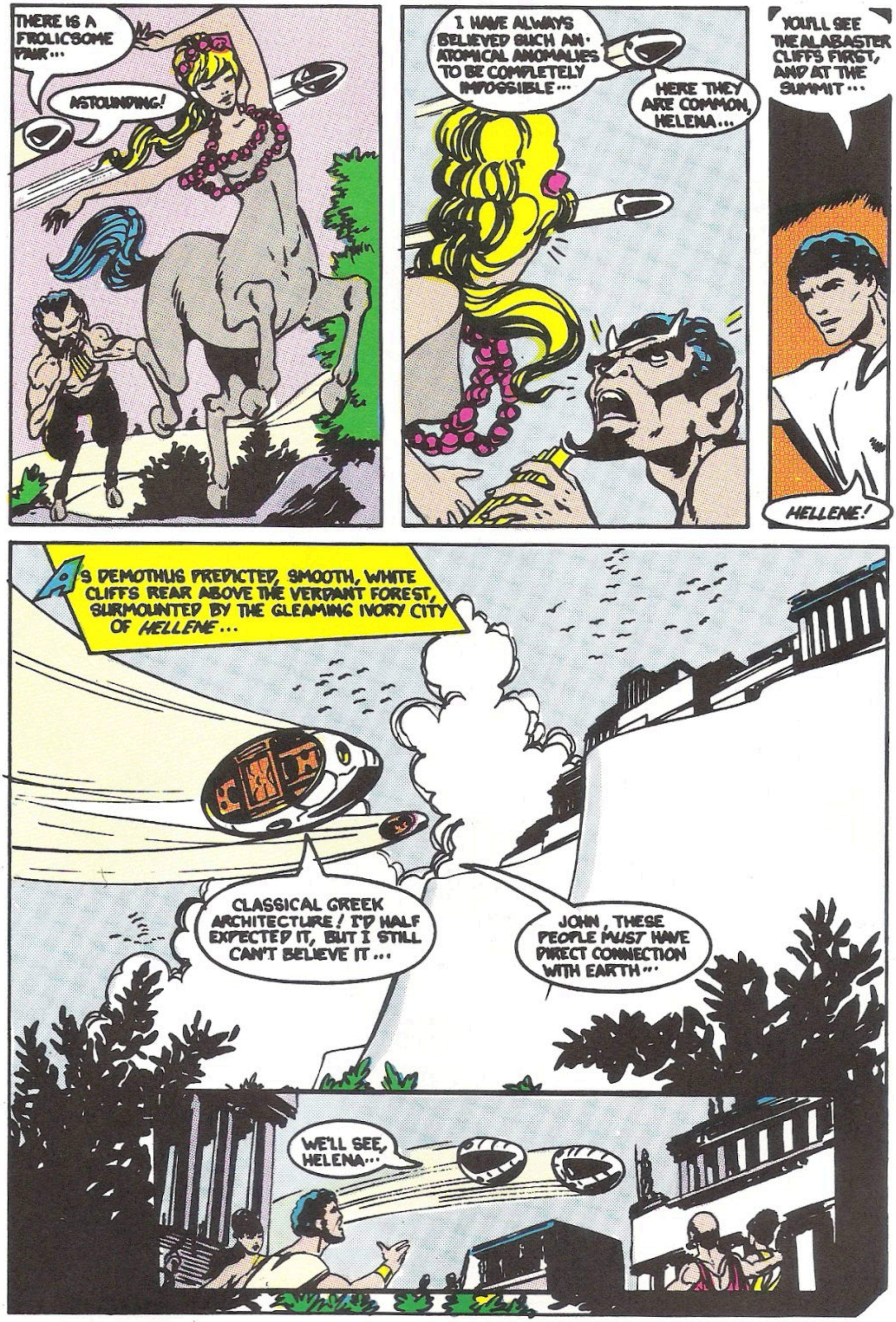

OH, TERRIFIC! NOW, FOR MY NEXT BRILLIANT ORDER...
I THINK WE'D BETTER FIND SOMEWHERE TO HIDE UNTIL MAIN MISSION SENDS HELP, JOHN...
WHY? THIS BRUTE WILL BE OUT FOR HOURS AFTER THE BLAST WE GAVE HIM...
YES, BUT THE CYCLOPS WASN'T A SOLITARY MONSTER, JOHN. HE BELONGED TO A WHOLE RACE, CALLED TITANS!
WHERE THERE'S ONE, THERE MAY BE OTHERS...
YOU WERE RIGHT! CAN YOU FREE YOUR WEAPONS?!
FIRE FOR ITS HEAD...
BUT, BEFORE THE ALPHANS CAN AIM...
UNGH!
...THE HUGE NET IS PULLED INTO A BAG AND SLAMMED AGAINST THE UNYIELDING CLIFF FACE...

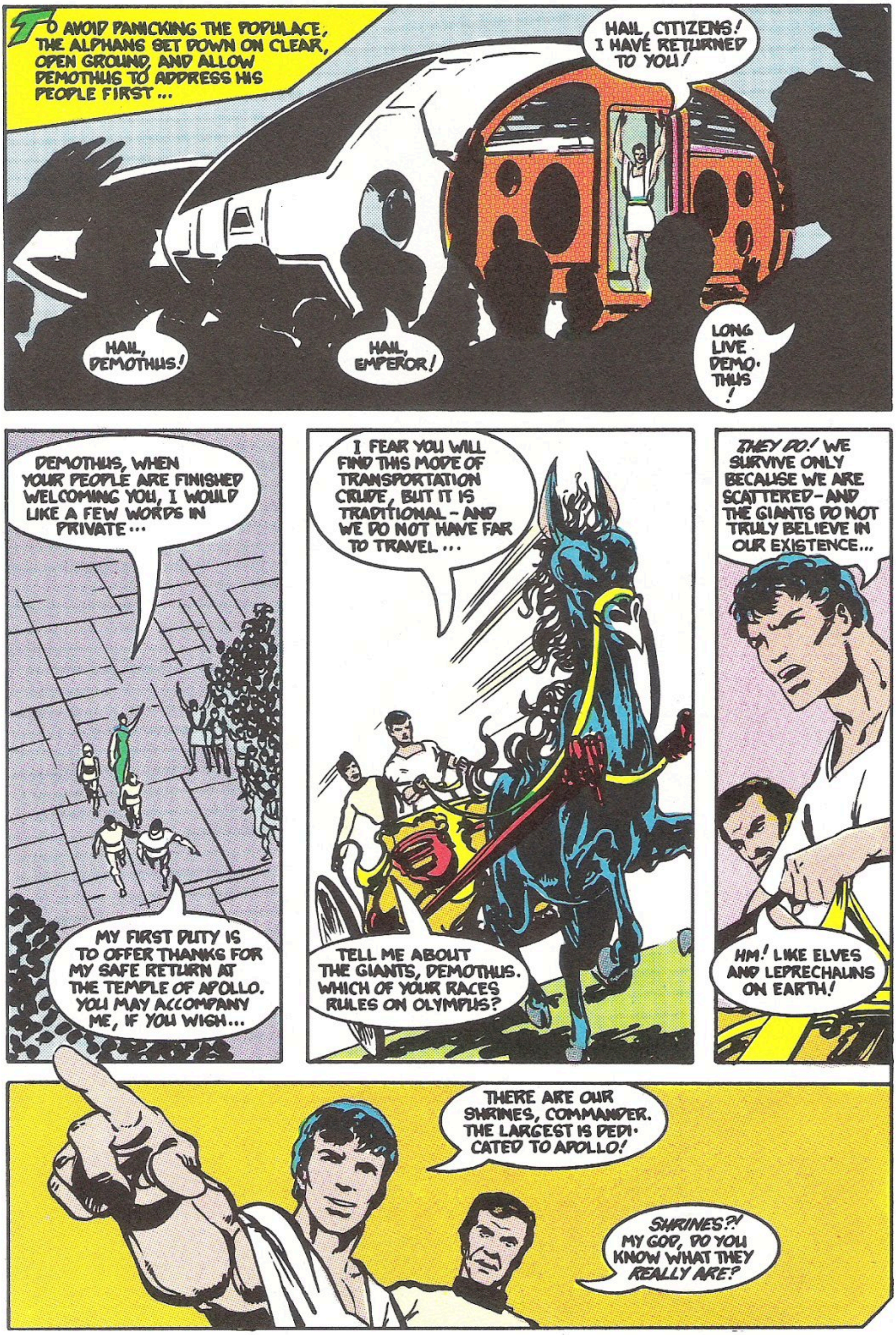

LITTLE ONES HAVE BIG STINGS, BUT NOT STING *THIS ONE!*
HA HA HA HA
SOME HOURS LATER, THE STENCH OF ROTTED STRAW AND DECAYING FOOD COAXED THE EXPLORERS BACK TO... *REALITY*...?
WHAT HAVE WE GOTTEN INTO THIS TIME?
I'D WAIT UNTIL YOU'RE FULLY CONSCIOUS BEFORE YOU LOOK. YOU'LL NEED ALL YOUR STRENGTH.
CAGES LIKE THEIR OWN STOOD OR HUNG ALL ABOUT THE CYCLOPS' CAVE, AND SOME HELD... *PEOPLE*...
INCLUDING...
COMMANDER! ARE WE GLAD TO SEE *YOU!* ...ALTHOUGH I'D HAVE PREFERRED YOU AT THE HEAD OF A RESCUE PARTY...
WE STARTED OUT THAT WAY, ALAN. HAVE YOU LEARNED ANYTHING...?
'FRAID NOT. WE WERE KNOCKED OUT WHEN NEPTUNE DROPPED US. OL' BLINKY THERE *TALKS*, BUT NOT TO US.
THE OTHERS SEEM TOO AFRAID OF THE CYCLOPS TO GET VERY CONVERSATIONAL...
THIS ONE *SPEAK!* SPEAK TO *YOU!*
JOHN!

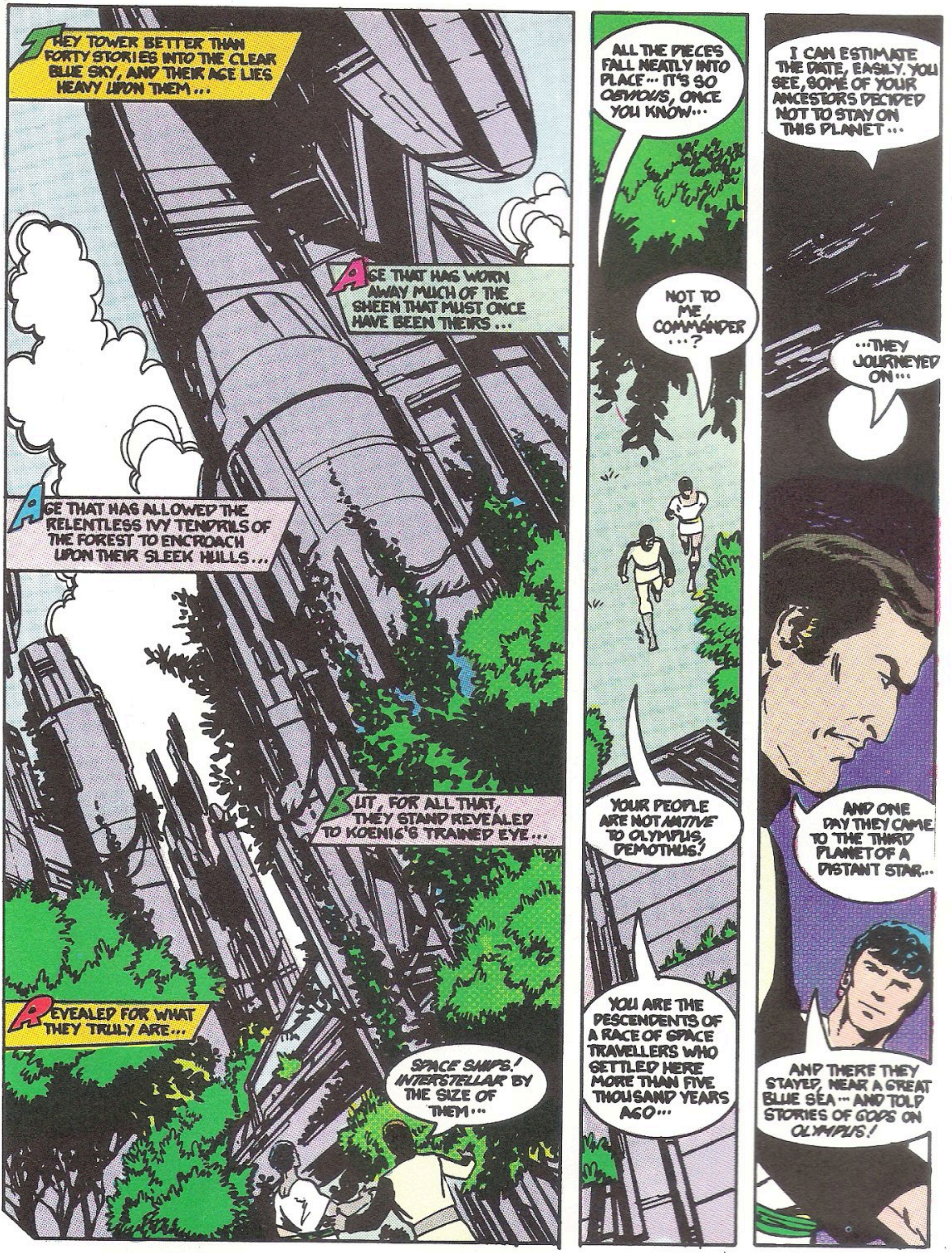

NOW YOU *TALK*. THIS ONE *LONELY*. OTHER LITTLE ONES NOT TALK.
ER... MY NAME IS HELENA RUSSELL, AND I'M FROM ANOTHER... LAND.
UM... COULD I POSSIBLY HAVE THE THINGS YOU TOOK FROM ME?
HERE. YOU SHOW THIS ONE HOW TO WORK *STINGER*. THIS ONE BE KING OF EVERYTHING WITH *STINGER*!
I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE THAT *EASY*!
HAVE TO MAKE ONE SHOT COUNT FOR THREE...
HELENA'S AIM WAS TRUE! THE BEAM STRUCK THE TITAN'S MOST VULNERABLE ORGAN...
ARRGH!
HURRY! I'VE CUT THE LOCK ON YOUR CAGE!
LEAVE IT TO A PRETTY FACE TO MAKE *MUSH* OUT OF *MUSCLE* EVERY TIME!
ZIK
TRY TO KEEP OUT OF THE CYCLOPS' REACH...
LET'S FREE THE OTHERS!

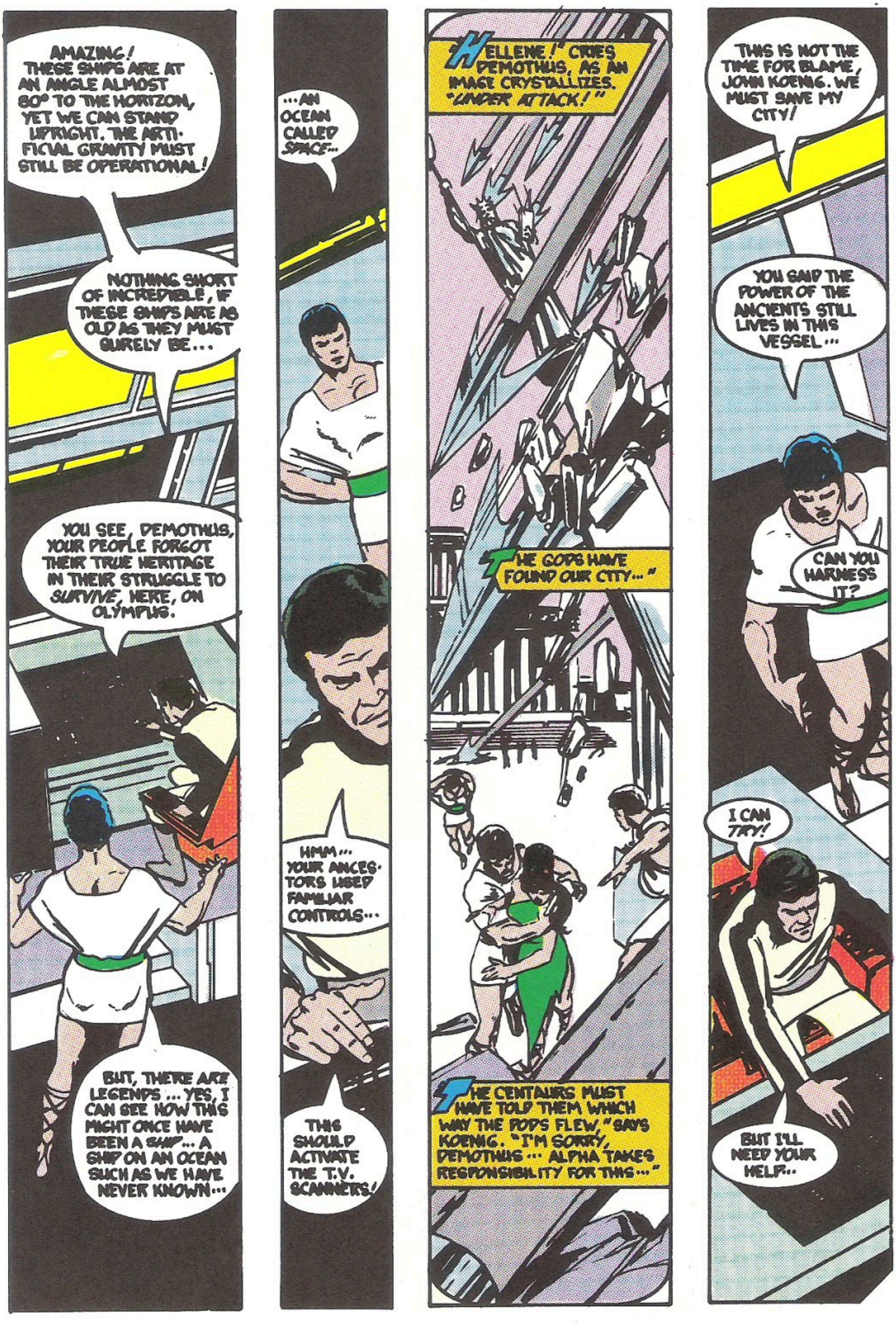

THAT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SHOT, HELENA...
...OR SHOULD I CALL YOU *DEADEYE*...?
SPEAKING OF DEADEYE.- LOOK OUT BEHIND YOU!
THAT WAS TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT!
COME ON! EVERYONE ELSE SHOULD BE OUTSIDE!
THIS WAY! HE WON'T BE ABLE TO FIND US IN THESE ROCKS...
NOT UNTIL HIS VISION RETURNS...
BY WHICH TIME WE SHALL BE *GONE*, SIR. I AM DEMOTHUS, LEADER OF THE HELLENITES. I CONFESS TO BEING AMAZED AT YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF US...
SURELY, YOU ARE NOT FROM OUR WORLD OF OLYMPUS?
JOHN, THE ANCIENT GREEKS WERE CALLED *HELLENES*! THIS CAN'T BE JUST *COINCIDENCE*!
PERHAPS WE HAVE COMMON ROOTS, HELENA. BUT THAT DOESN'T SOLVE OUR IMMEDIATE PROBLEM...
WE HAVE TO GET BACK TO ALPHA
WE, TOO, MUST RETURN TO OUR HOME, BUT OUR SHIP WAS DASHED AGAINST THE SHORE ROCKS!

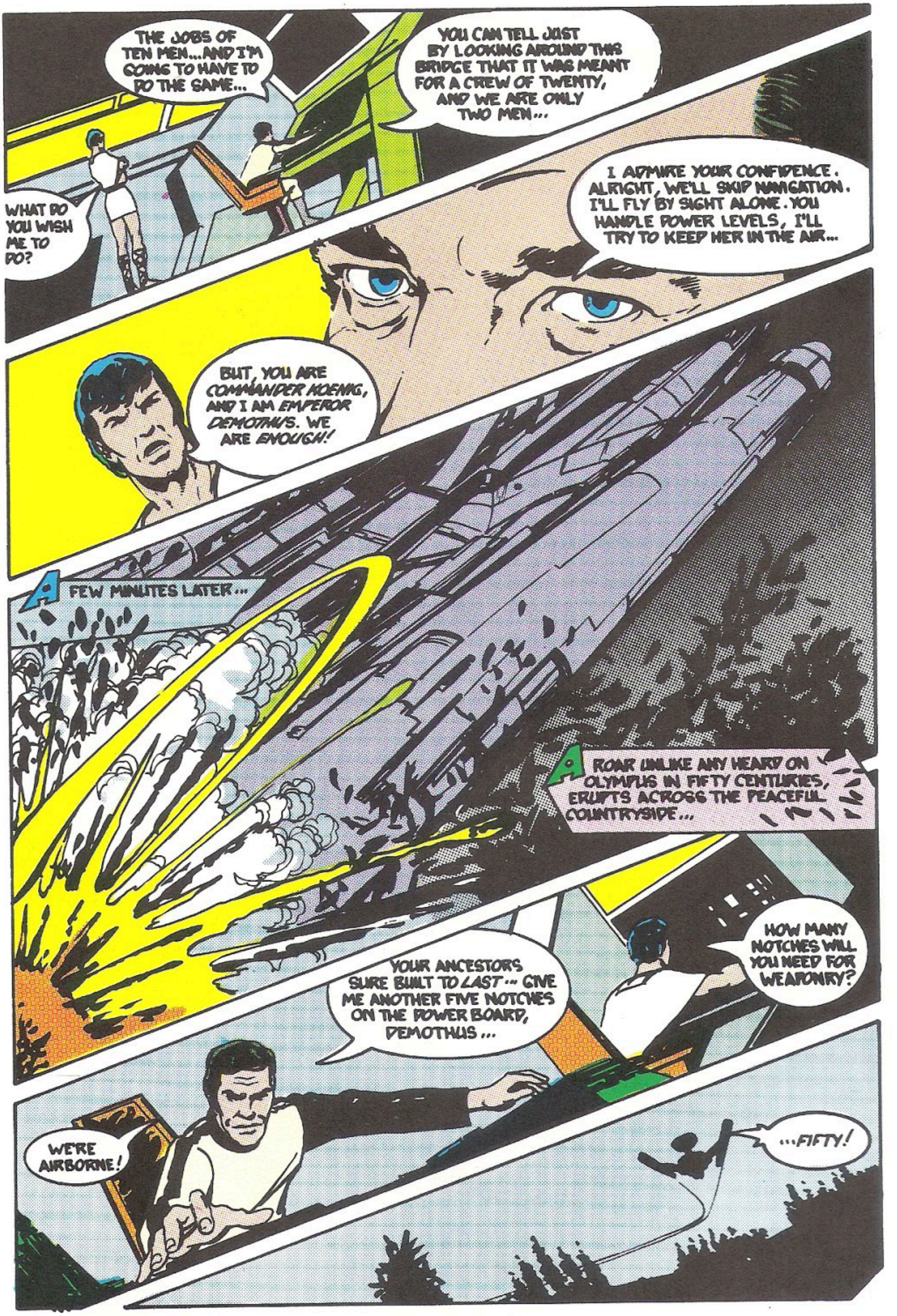

ALAN, THE MAIN BODIES OF THE EAGLES ARE WRECKED, PROBABLY BEYOND REPAIR, BUT I THINK WE CAN SALVAGE THE CONTROL MODULES.
WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT CONDITION YOURS IS IN, COMMANDER, BUT FIVE ISN'T SPACEWORTHY. WE'D NEVER MAKE IT BACK TO ALPHA.
I DON'T INTEND TO TRY, ALAN. I WANT TO FLY TO *HELLENE*. I'VE A... FEELING WE MAY FIND *EVERYTHING WE NEED* THERE...
YOU HAVE A WAY FOR US TO RETURN TO *OUR* LAND? PLEASE, TELL US, WHERE IS YOUR SHIP...?
RIGHT THERE, DEMOTHUS — AND THE CYCLOPS WE LEFT BEHIND IS GONE. C'MON, ALAN. LET'S CHECK OUT THOSE MODULES...
SHIPS? INLAND? WITHOUT SAILS? THINGS OUT OF LEGEND!
SEVERAL HOURS OF HARD WORK LATER...
THAT'S IT, COMMANDER! BOTH PODS LOOK LIKE PLUMBER'S NIGHTMARES, BUT THEY'LL *FLY*— ALTHOUGH I CAN'T GUARANTEE THEIR SAFETY...
IT'LL HAVE TO SERVE, ALAN. YOU'VE DONE A FINE JOB WITH THE PARTS WE CANNIBALIZED FROM THE SERVICE MODULES...
DISPITE CARTER'S DOUBTS, THE PODS FLEW FAIRLY WELL...
NOT EASY TO KEEP LEVEL WITHOUT WINGS, BUT THE ATTITUDE JETS ARE SERVING...
YONDER IS THE LAND OF CENTAURS AND SATYRS, O ALPHANS...
WATCH BELOW...

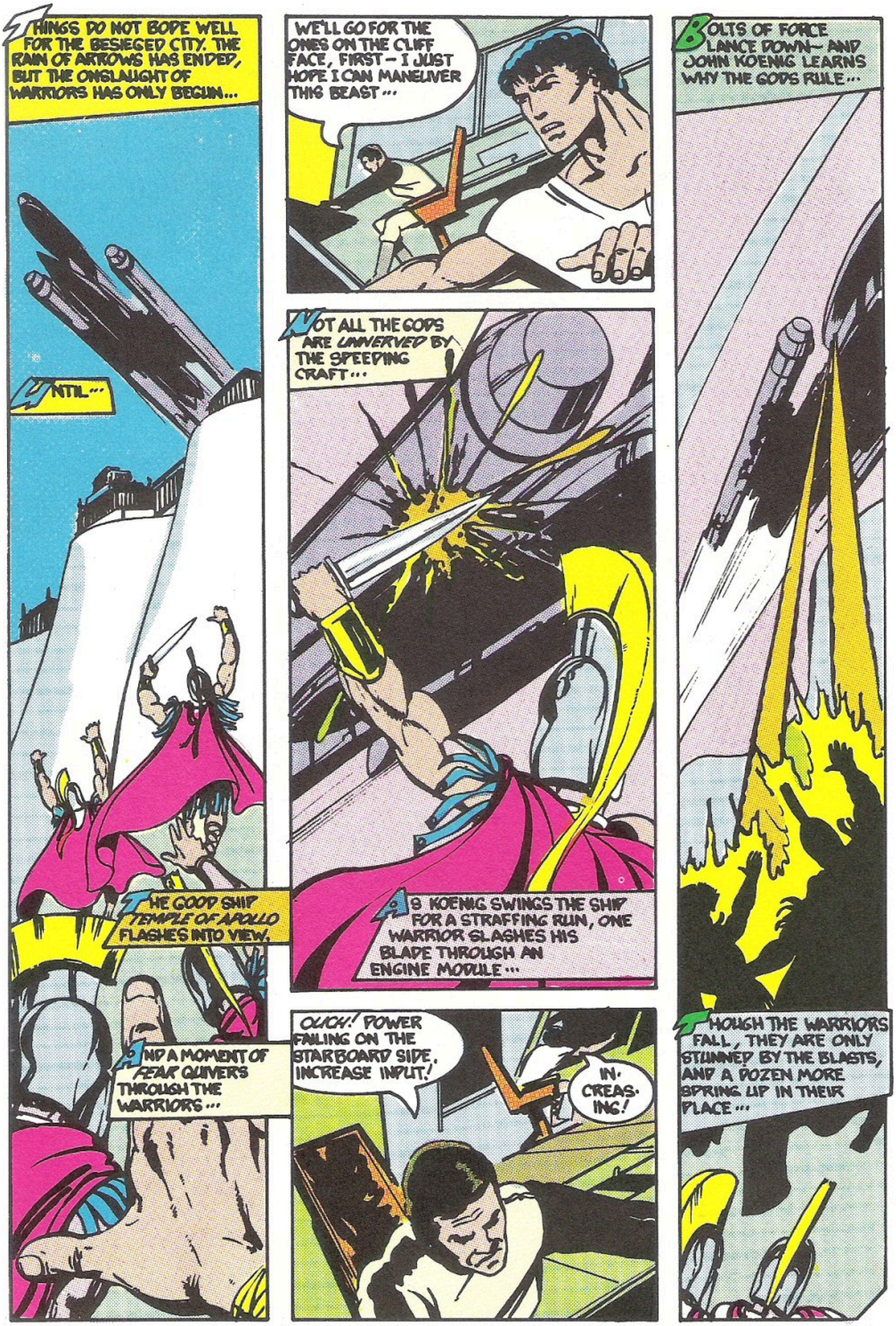

THERE IS A FROLICSOME PAIR...
ASTOUNDING!
I HAVE ALWAYS BELIEVED SUCH ANATOMICAL ANOMALIES TO BE COMPLETELY IMPOSSIBLE...
HERE THEY ARE COMMON, HELENA...
YOU'LL SEE THE ALABASTER CLIFFS FIRST, AND AT THE SUMMIT...
HELLENE!
AS DEMOTHUS PREDICTED, SMOOTH, WHITE CLIFFS REAR ABOVE THE VERDANT FOREST, SURMOUNTED BY THE GLEAMING IVORY CITY OF *HELLENE*...
CLASSICAL GREEK ARCHITECTURE! I'D HALF EXPECTED IT, BUT I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT...
JOHN, THESE PEOPLE *MUST* HAVE DIRECT CONNECTION WITH EARTH...
WE'LL SEE, HELENA...

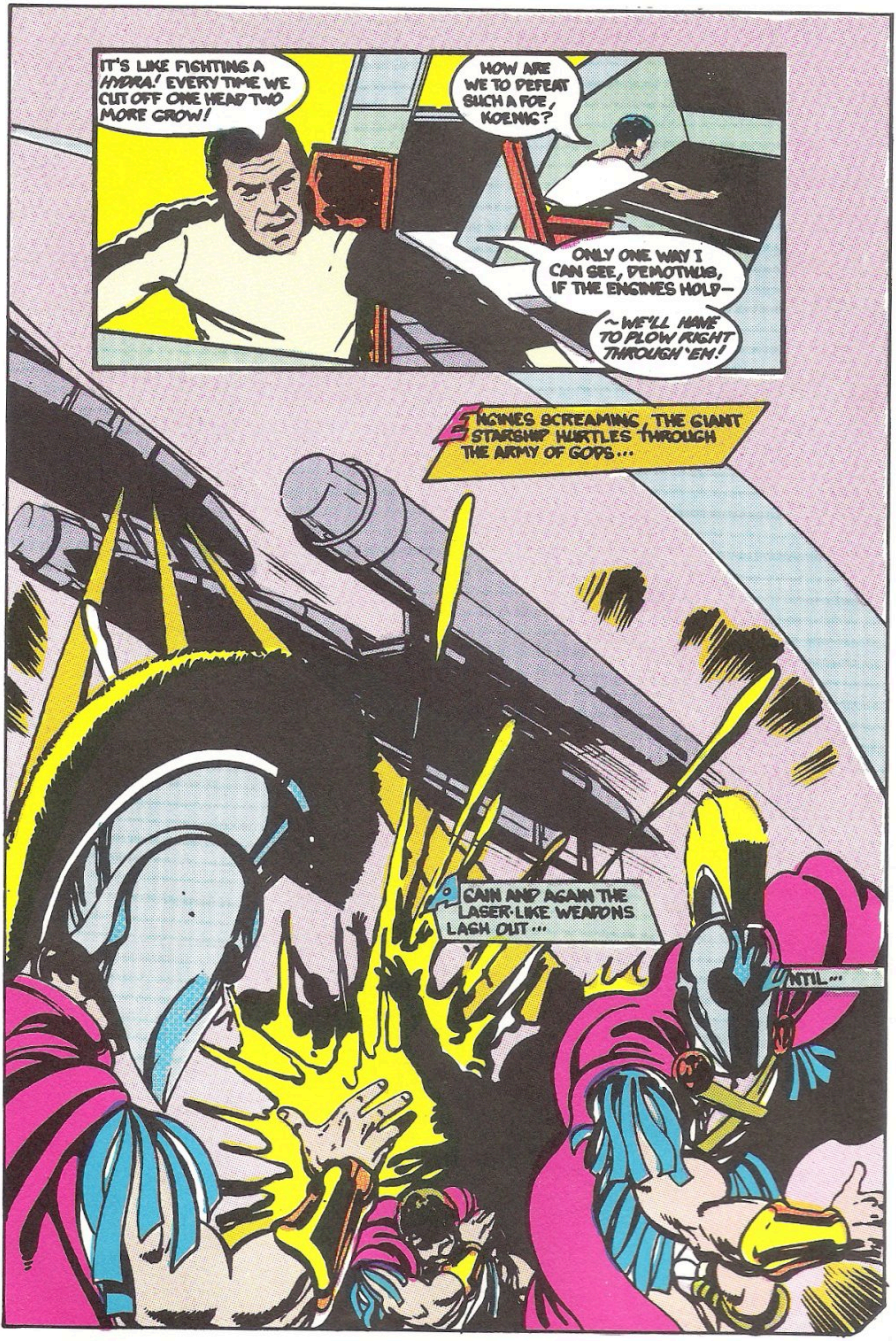

TO AVOID PANICKING THE POPULACE, THE ALPHANS SET DOWN ON CLEAR, OPEN GROUND, AND ALLOW DEMOTHUS TO ADDRESS HIS PEOPLE FIRST...
HAIL, CITIZENS! I HAVE RETURNED TO YOU!
HAIL, DEMOTHUS!
HAIL, EMPEROR!
LONG LIVE DEMOTHUS!
DEMOTHUS, WHEN YOUR PEOPLE ARE FINISHED WELCOMING YOU, I WOULD LIKE A FEW WORDS IN PRIVATE...
MY FIRST DUTY IS TO OFFER THANKS FOR MY SAFE RETURN AT THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO. YOU MAY ACCOMPANY ME, IF YOU WISH...
I FEAR YOU WILL FIND THIS MODE OF TRANSPORTATION CRUDE, BUT IT IS TRADITIONAL— AND WE DO NOT HAVE FAR TO TRAVEL...
TELL ME ABOUT THE GIANTS, DEMOTHUS. WHICH OF YOUR RACES RULES ON OLYMPUS?
THEY DO! WE SURVIVE ONLY BECAUSE WE ARE SCATTERED— AND THE GIANTS DO NOT TRULY BELIEVE IN OUR EXISTENCE...
HM! LIKE ELVES AND LEPRECHAUNS ON EARTH!
THERE ARE OUR SHRINES, COMMANDER. THE LARGEST IS DEDICATED TO APOLLO!
SHRINES?! MY GOD, DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY REALLY ARE?

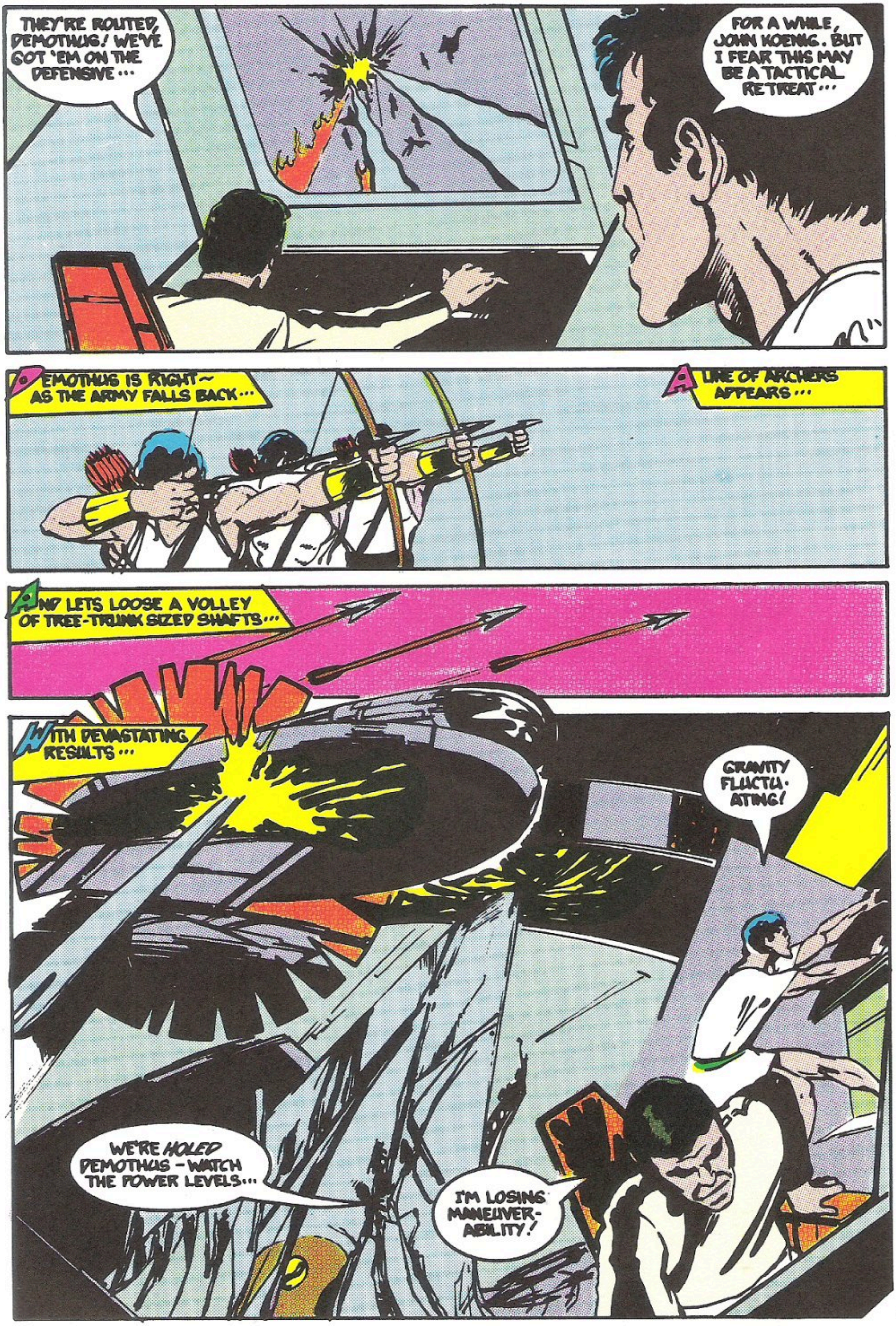

THEY TOWER BETTER THAN FORTY STORIES INTO THE CLEAR BLUE SKY, AND THEIR AGE LIES HEAVY UPON THEM...
AGE THAT HAS WORN AWAY MUCH OF THE SHEEN THAT MUST ONCE HAVE BEEN THEIRS...
AGE THAT HAS ALLOWED THE RELENTLESS IVY TENDRILS OF THE FOREST TO ENCROACH UPON THEIR SLEEK HULLS...
BUT, FOR ALL THAT, THEY STAND REVEALED TO KOENIG'S TRAINED EYE...
REVEALED FOR WHAT THEY TRULY ARE...
SPACE SHIPS! INTERSTELLAR BY THE SIZE OF THEM...
ALL THE PIECES FALL NEATLY INTO PLACE... IT'S SO OBVIOUS, ONCE YOU KNOW...
NOT TO ME, COMMANDER...?
YOUR PEOPLE ARE NOT NATIVE TO OLYMPUS, DEMOTHUS!
YOU ARE THE DESCENDENTS OF A RACE OF SPACE TRAVELLERS WHO SETTLED HERE MORE THAN FIVE THOUSAND YEARS AGO...
I CAN ESTIMATE THE DATE, EASILY. YOU SEE, SOME OF YOUR ANCESTORS DECIDED NOT TO STAY ON THIS PLANET...
...THEY JOURNEYED ON...
AND ONE DAY THEY CAME TO THE THIRD PLANET OF A DISTANT STAR...
AND THERE THEY STAYED, NEAR A GREAT BLUE SEA... AND TOLD STORIES OF GODS ON OLYMPUS!

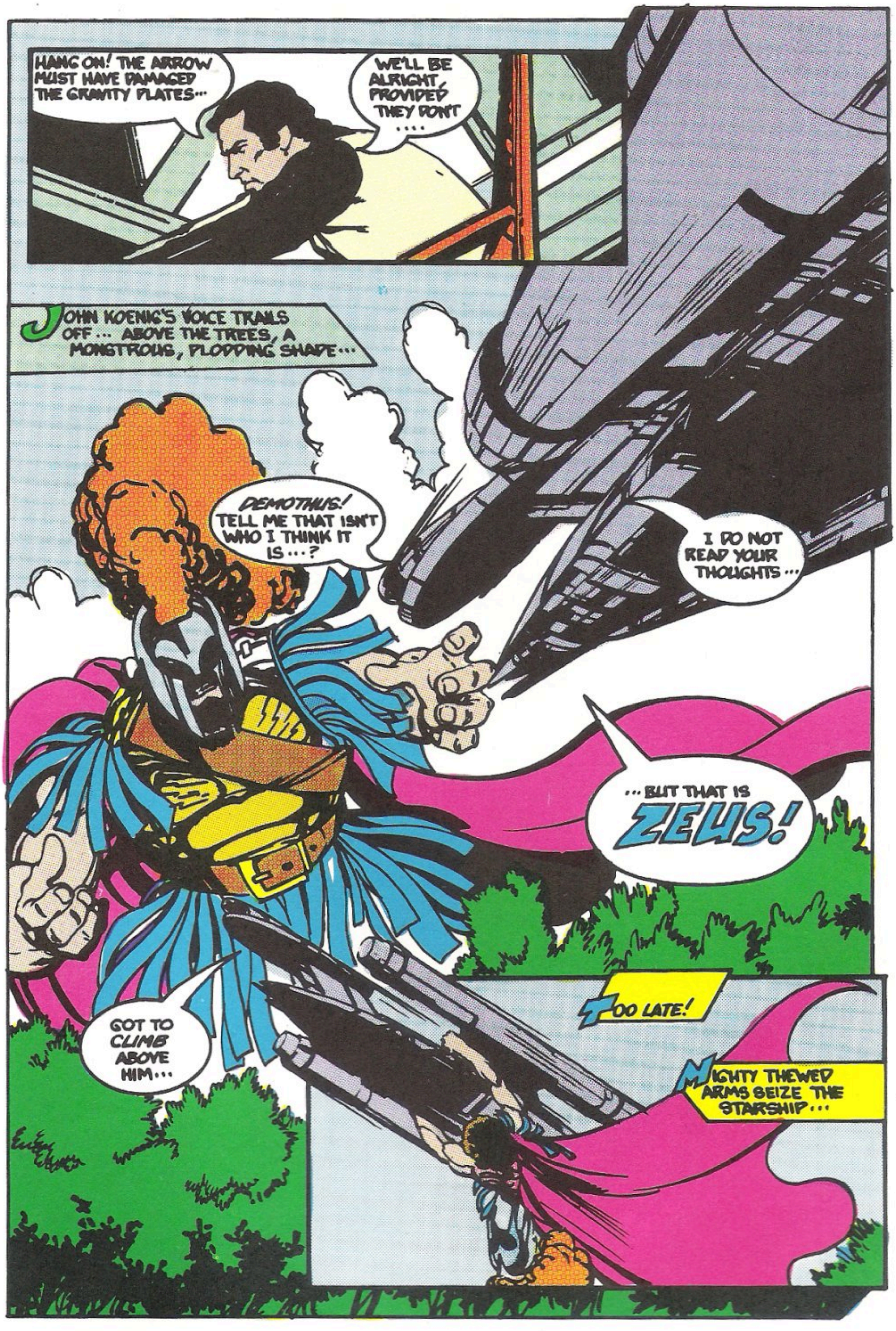

AMAZING! THESE SHIPS ARE AT AN ANGLE ALMOST 80° TO THE HORIZON, YET WE CAN STAND UPRIGHT. THE ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY MUST STILL BE OPERATIONAL!
NOTHING SHORT OF INCREDIBLE, IF THESE SHIPS ARE AS OLD AS THEY MUST SURELY BE...
YOU SEE, DEMOTHUS, YOUR PEOPLE FORGOT THEIR TRUE HERITAGE IN THEIR STRUGGLE TO *SURVIVE*, HERE, ON OLYMPUS.
BUT, THERE ARE LEGENDS ... YES, I CAN SEE HOW THIS MIGHT ONCE HAVE BEEN A *SHIP*... A SHIP ON AN OCEAN SUCH AS WE HAVE NEVER KNOWN...
...AN OCEAN CALLED *SPACE*...
HMM... YOUR ANCESTORS USED FAMILIAR CONTROLS...
THIS SHOULD ACTIVATE THE T.V. SCANNERS!
"HELLENE!" CRIES DEMOTHUS, AS AN IMAGE CRYSTALLIZES. "*UNDER ATTACK!*"
"THE GODS HAVE FOUND OUR CITY..."
THE CENTAURS MUST HAVE TOLD THEM WHICH WAY THE PODS FLEW," SAYS KOENIG. "I'M SORRY, DEMOTHUS ... ALPHA TAKES RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS..."
THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR BLAME, JOHN KOENIG. WE MUST SAVE MY CITY!
YOU SAID THE POWER OF THE ANCIENTS STILL LIVES IN THIS VESSEL...
CAN YOU HARNESS IT?
I CAN *TRY!*
BUT I'LL NEED YOUR HELP...

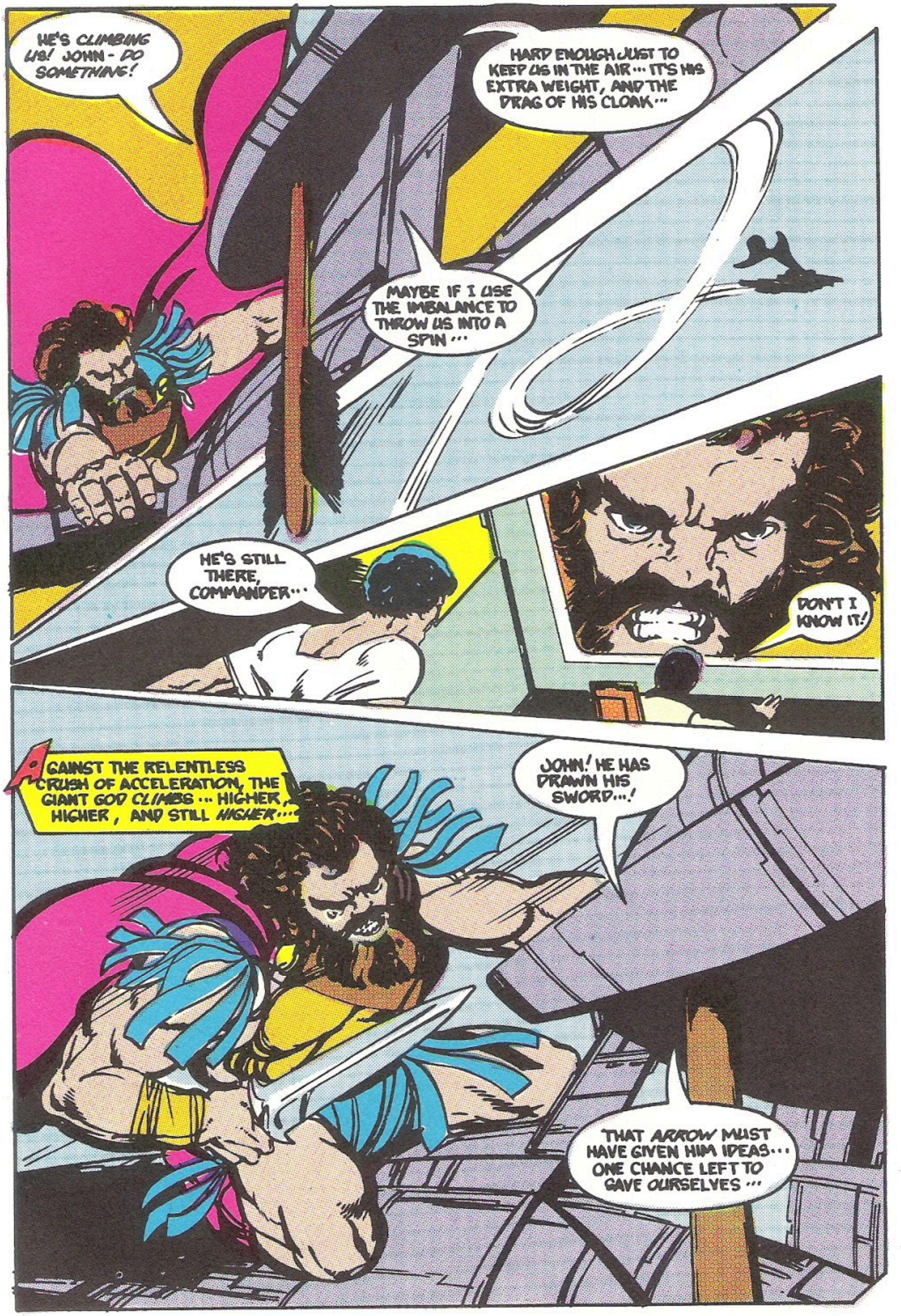

THE JOBS OF TEN MEN...AND I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DO THE SAME...
YOU CAN TELL JUST BY LOOKING AROUND THIS BRIDGE THAT IT WAS MEANT FOR A CREW OF TWENTY, AND WE ARE ONLY TWO MEN...
WHAT DO YOU WISH ME TO DO?
I ADMIRE YOUR CONFIDENCE. ALRIGHT, WE'LL SKIP NAVIGATION. I'LL FLY BY SIGHT ALONE. YOU HANDLE POWER LEVELS, I'LL TRY TO KEEP HER IN THE AIR...
BUT, YOU ARE COMMANDER KOENIG, AND I AM EMPEROR DEMOTHUS. WE ARE ENOUGH!
A FEW MINUTES LATER...
A ROAR UNLIKE ANY HEARD ON OLYMPUS IN FIFTY CENTURIES, ERUPTS ACROSS THE PEACEFUL COUNTRYSIDE...
HOW MANY NOTCHES WILL YOU NEED FOR WEAPONRY?
YOUR ANCESTORS SURE BUILT TO LAST... GIVE ME ANOTHER FIVE NOTCHES ON THE POWER BOARD, DEMOTHUS...
WE'RE AIRBORNE!
...FIFTY!

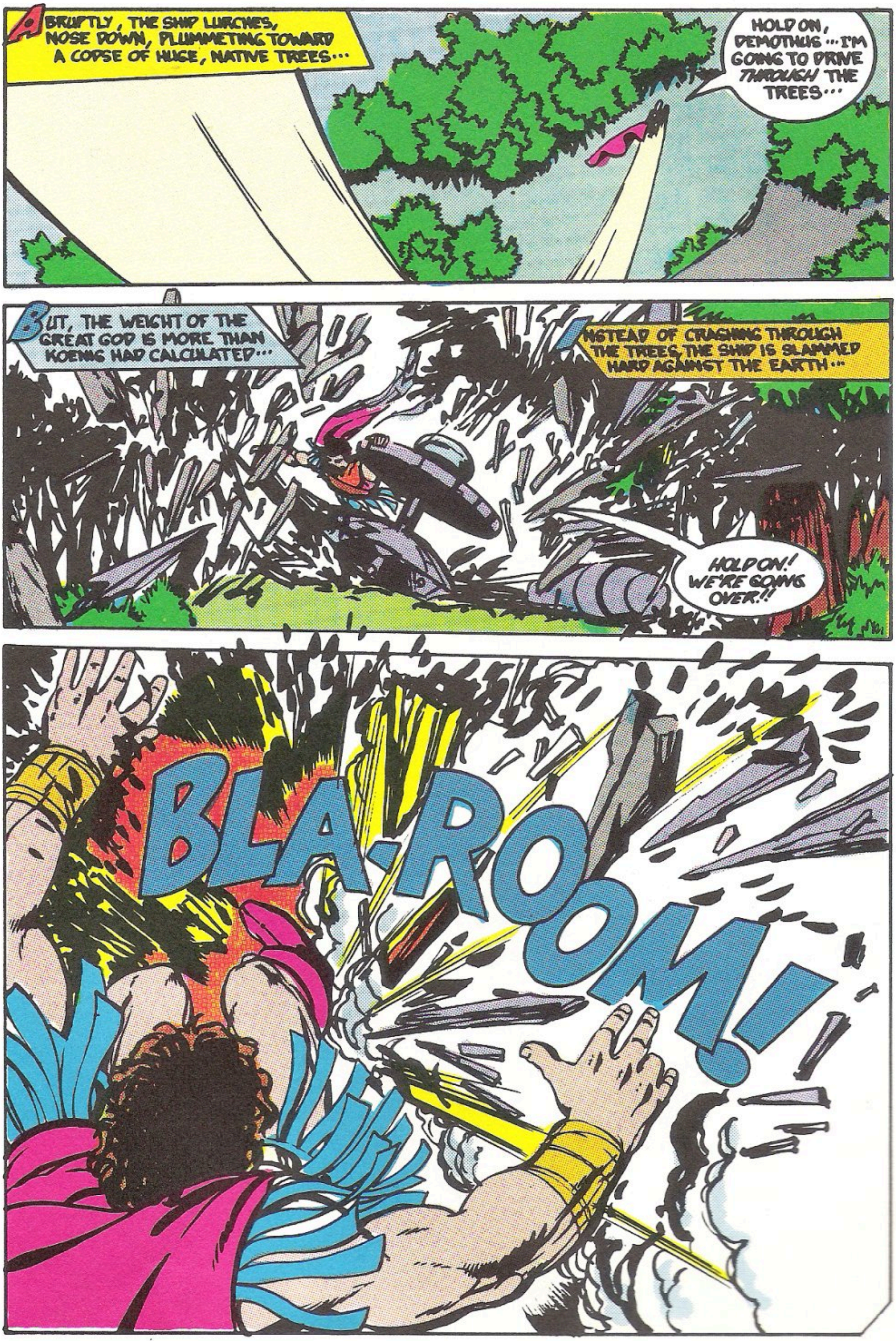

THINGS DO NOT BODE WELL FOR THE BESIEGED CITY. THE RAIN OF ARROWS HAS ENDED, BUT THE ONSLAUGHT OF WARRIORS HAS ONLY BEGUN...
UNTIL...
THE GOOD SHIP TEMPLE OF APOLLO FLASHES INTO VIEW.
AND A MOMENT OF FEAR QUIVERS THROUGH THE WARRIORS...
WE'LL GO FOR THE ONES ON THE CLIFF FACE, FIRST — I JUST HOPE I CAN MANEUVER THIS BEAST...
NOT ALL THE GODS ARE UNNERVED BY THE SPEEDING CRAFT...
AS KOENIG SWINGS THE SHIP FOR A STRAFFING RUN, ONE WARRIOR SLASHES HIS BLADE THROUGH AN ENGINE MODULE...
OUCH! POWER FAILING ON THE STARBOARD SIDE, INCREASE INPUT!
IN-CREAS-ING!
BOLTS OF FORCE LANCE DOWN— AND JOHN KOENIG LEARNS WHY THE GODS RULE...
THOUGH THE WARRIORS FALL, THEY ARE ONLY STUNNED BY THE BLASTS, AND A DOZEN MORE SPRING UP IN THEIR PLACE...

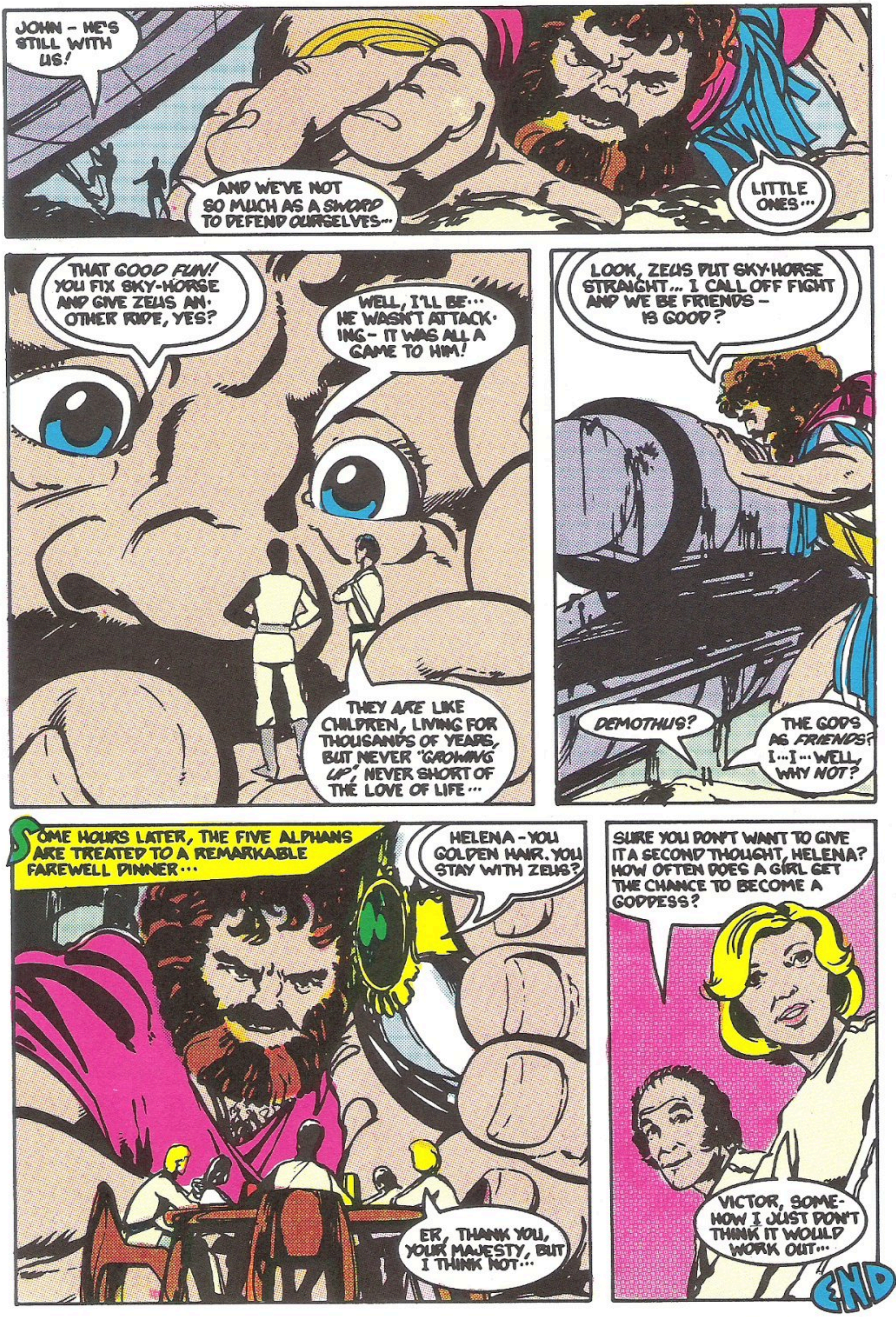

IT'S LIKE FIGHTING A *HYDRA!* EVERY TIME WE CUT OFF ONE HEAD TWO MORE GROW!
HOW ARE WE TO DEFEAT SUCH A FOE, KOENIG?
ONLY ONE WAY I CAN SEE, DEMOTHUS, IF THE ENGINES HOLD—
~ *WE'LL HAVE TO PLOW RIGHT THROUGH 'EM!*
ENGINES SCREAMING, THE GIANT STARSHIP HURTLES THROUGH THE ARMY OF GODS...
AGAIN AND AGAIN THE LASER-LIKE WEAPONS LASH OUT...
UNTIL...


THEY'RE ROUTED, DEMOTHUS! WE'VE GOT 'EM ON THE DEFENSIVE...
FOR A WHILE, JOHN KOENIG. BUT I FEAR THIS MAY BE A TACTICAL RETREAT...
DEMOTHUS IS RIGHT~ AS THE ARMY FALLS BACK...
A LINE OF ARCHERS APPEARS...
AND LETS LOOSE A VOLLEY OF TREE-TRUNK SIZED SHAFTS...
WITH DEVASTATING RESULTS...
GRAVITY FLUCTU-ATING!
WE'RE HOLED DEMOTHUS - WATCH THE POWER LEVELS...
I'M LOSING MANEUVER-ABILITY!


HANG ON! THE ARROW MUST HAVE DAMAGED THE GRAVITY PLATES...
WE'LL BE ALRIGHT, PROVIDED THEY DON'T ....
JOHN KOENIG'S VOICE TRAILS OFF... ABOVE THE TREES, A MONSTROUS, PLODDING SHAPE...
DEMOTHUS! TELL ME THAT ISN'T WHO I THINK IT IS...?
I DO NOT READ YOUR THOUGHTS...
...BUT THAT IS ZEUS!
TOO LATE!
GOT TO CLIMB ABOVE HIM...
MIGHTY THEWED ARMS SEIZE THE STARSHIP...


HE'S *CLIMBING* US! JOHN - *DO* SOMETHING!
HARD ENOUGH JUST TO KEEP US IN THE AIR... IT'S HIS EXTRA WEIGHT, AND THE DRAG OF HIS CLOAK...
MAYBE IF I USE THE IMBALANCE TO THROW US INTO A SPIN...
HE'S STILL THERE, COMMANDER...
DON'T I KNOW IT!
AGAINST THE RELENTLESS CRUSH OF ACCELERATION, THE GIANT GOD *CLIMBS*... HIGHER, HIGHER, AND STILL *HIGHER*...
JOHN! HE HAS DRAWN HIS SWORD...!
THAT *ARROW* MUST HAVE GIVEN HIM IDEAS... ONE CHANCE LEFT TO SAVE *OURSELVES*...


ABRUPTLY, THE SHIP LURCHES, NOSE DOWN, PLUMMETING TOWARD A COPSE OF HUGE, NATIVE TREES...
HOLD ON, DEMOTHUS... I'M GOING TO DRIVE *THROUGH!* THE TREES...
BUT, THE WEIGHT OF THE GREAT GOD IS MORE THAN KOENIG HAD CALCULATED...
INSTEAD OF CRASHING THROUGH THE TREES, THE SHIP IS SLAMMED HARD AGAINST THE EARTH...
HOLD ON! WE'RE GOING OVER!!
BLA-ROOM!


JOHN - HE'S STILL WITH US!
AND WE'VE NOT SO MUCH AS A SWORD TO DEFEND OURSELVES...
LITTLE ONES...
THAT GOOD FUN! YOU FIX SKY-HORSE AND GIVE ZEUS AN-OTHER RIDE, YES?
WELL, I'LL BE... HE WASN'T ATTACKING - IT WAS ALL A GAME TO HIM!
THEY ARE LIKE CHILDREN, LIVING FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS, BUT NEVER "GROWING UP," NEVER SHORT OF THE LOVE OF LIFE...
LOOK, ZEUS PUT SKY-HORSE STRAIGHT... I CALL OFF FIGHT AND WE BE FRIENDS - IS GOOD?
DEMOTHUS?
THE GODS AS FRIENDS? I...I... WELL, WHY NOT?
SOME HOURS LATER, THE FIVE ALPHANS ARE TREATED TO A REMARKABLE FAREWELL DINNER...
HELENA - YOU GOLDEN HAIR. YOU STAY WITH ZEUS?
ER, THANK YOU, YOUR MAJESTY, BUT I THINK NOT...
SURE YOU DON'T WANT TO GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT, HELENA? HOW OFTEN DOES A GIRL GET THE CHANCE TO BECOME A GODDESS?
VICTOR, SOMEHOW I JUST DON'T THINK IT WOULD WORK OUT...
END

THE MICRON METAMORPHOSIS

"Do we have a sensor scan of the planet?" inquired Commander John Koenig as the Eagle craft containing Dr. Helena Russell, Professor Victor Bergman and himself sped towards the tiny, mystery world they'd stumbled onto in the deep, dark regions of unexplored space.

"Yes, John, we have a data read-out," replied Bergman in his usual stoic tone. "The computer scan confirms that there is alien life on the strange, miniature planet. The sensors can determine if life exists, but they cannot determine the structure or makeup of alien life forms without more information. What type of aliens we will find, I do not know, but we will definitely find life on that planet," stated Bergman.

"I wish we could stop referring to what may well be our new home as 'that planet'. Since we discovered it, I think we're entitled to name it," said Helena as she stared at the central viewing screen on which the planet was visible.

"It may already have a name since some form of native life exists on it, but I don't see anything wrong with giving it a temporary name. Do you, Victor?" asked Koenig as he manoeuvred the Eagle into the planet's atmosphere.

"Give it a name, Helena! The honour is yours," replied Bergman.

"Thank you, Victor. I'll be happy to name it," answered Helena. "Since the entire planet is a microscopic reproduction of Earth and it is only about the size of North America, I am going to dub it Micron," she said.

"Micron is a perfect name for the planet," said Koenig as he prepared to touch down on the surface of the tiny world.

"Welcome to Micron," quipped Bergman as the Eagle came to rest on the new and unexplored world. "The air is breathable. We won't need space suits," announced Victor as he checked the sensor scopes.

"There is certainly a strange collection of alien vegetation growing on Micron," commented Helena when the hatch of the Eagle opened to allow the Alpha crew to exit. "There seems to be no biological order. It's uncanny!"

"Rather than ponder the causes of such unusual plant formations, I suggest that we proceed to search for the dominant life form," proposed Victor. "I hypothesize that whatever fell out of space onto this planet took root and grew. That might account for the lack of single species dominance."

Before Bergman could finish explaining his theory to his comrades, the ground beneath their feet began to tremble. At first, it appeared to be a mild tremor that would rapidly pass. Then, suddenly, unexplainably, it began to increase in intensity.

The refugees from Earth fell to the ground and clung to the soil of the alien world in a useless attempt to steady themselves.

Soon, they realized that the terrible, violent shaking was more than just an ordinary earthquake. Micron was crumbling, breaking up, exploding! The entire planet was splitting right down to the core of the miniature world.

"Get back to the Eagle! We've got to blast off from this planet, immediately!" shouted Koenig as he fought to regain his balance.

Frantically, they got back on their feet and staggered toward their space vehicle. Luckily, they reached the ship. Quickly, they prepared for immediate lift-off.

The Eagle slowly rose from the surface. When a suitable altitude was attained, Koenig used the massive power of the ship's rockets to flee to the outer limits of space where they were safe.

Koenig, Bergman and Russell watched on the viewing screen as the planet they had named Micron began to splinter and crack. The circular mass of soil and foliage was breaking open.

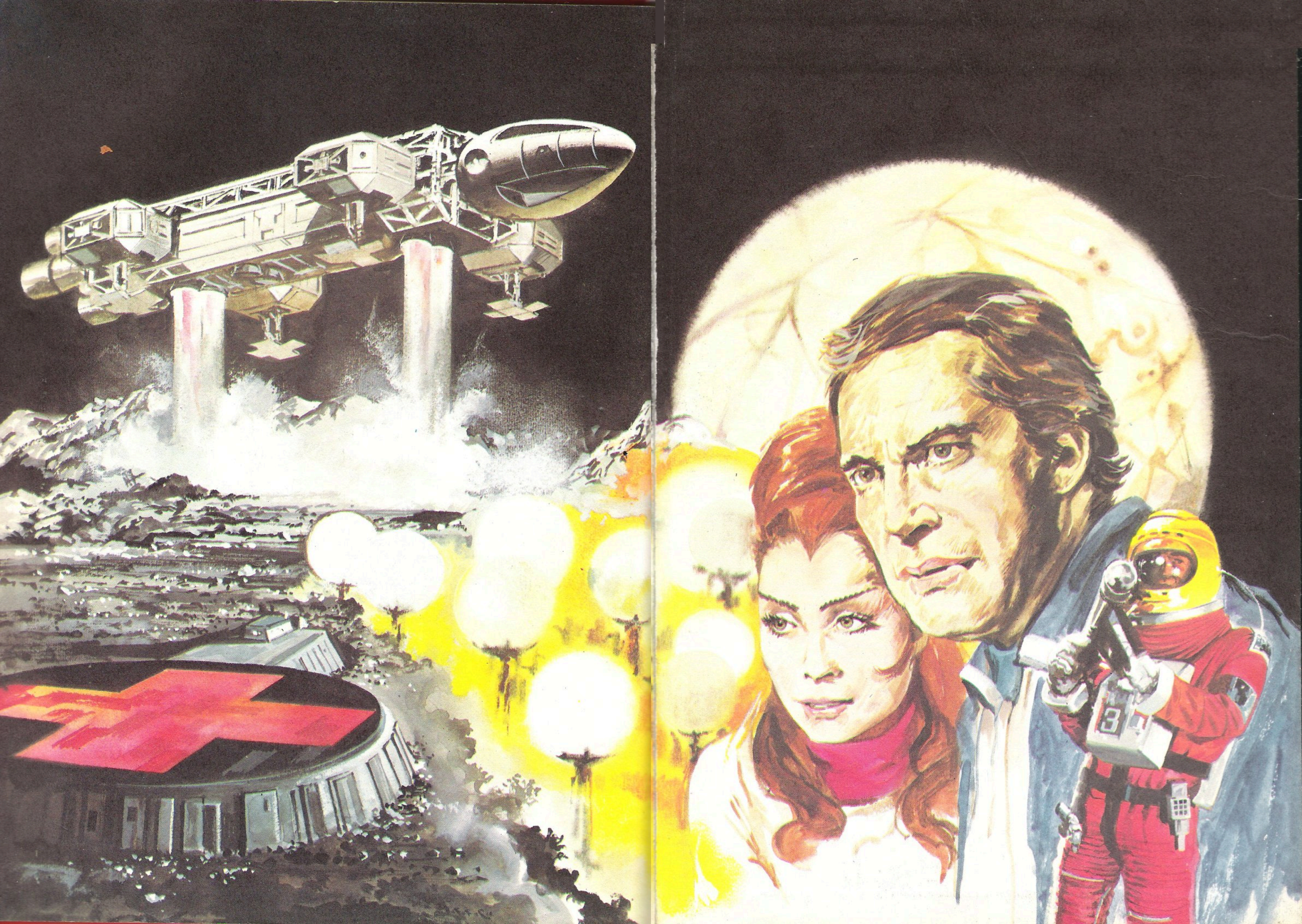
They realized that what they were watching wasn't the destruction of a tiny planet. A world wasn't going up in smoke. Life wasn't being snuffed out. There was no life on the surface of Micron! The living creature their sensor scan had detected was inside Micron!

This strange speck of dust floating aimlessly through the outer limits of the universe wasn't a planet. It was a hollow shell! It was an egg! Micron was a gigantic cocoon with bits of dirt and vegetation lying on its outer surface.

Suddenly, the entire planet shattered. A huge, winged insect emerged from the dark, inner regions of Micron. The monstrous, alien bug immediately launched itself into space and zoomed off into the unexplored regions of the universe at supersonic speed.

"My god!" stammered Koenig as he watched in amazement. "Micron wasn't a planet! It was the cocoon of a gigantic space insect!"

There were no explanations for what had transpired. Some of the mysteries of dark space are beyond the scope of human comprehension and intelligence. There would never be any answers to their many questions about Micron — for Micron never really existed!



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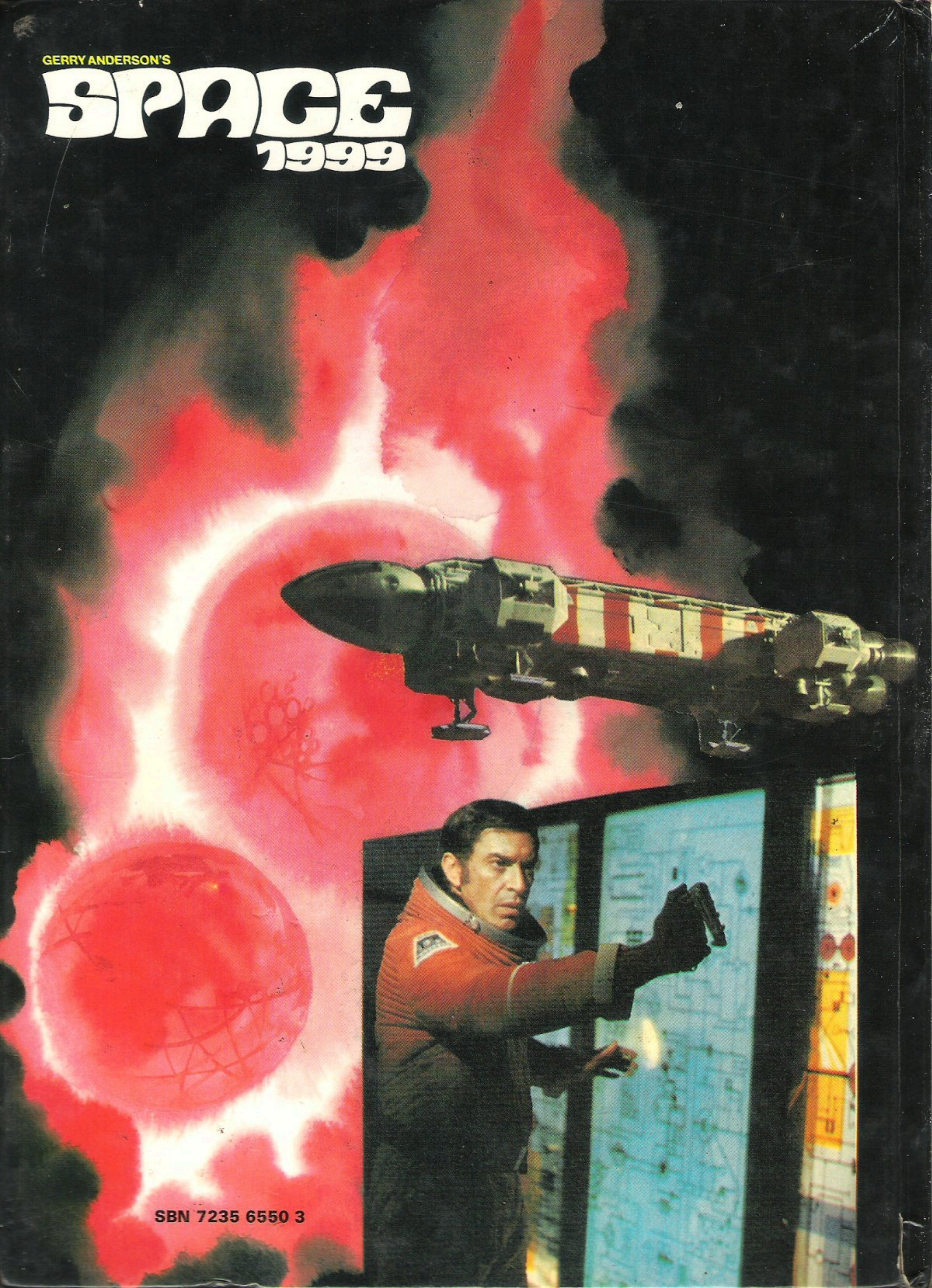

GERRY ANDERSON'S

SPACE 1999

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GERRY ANDERSON'S

SPACE 1999

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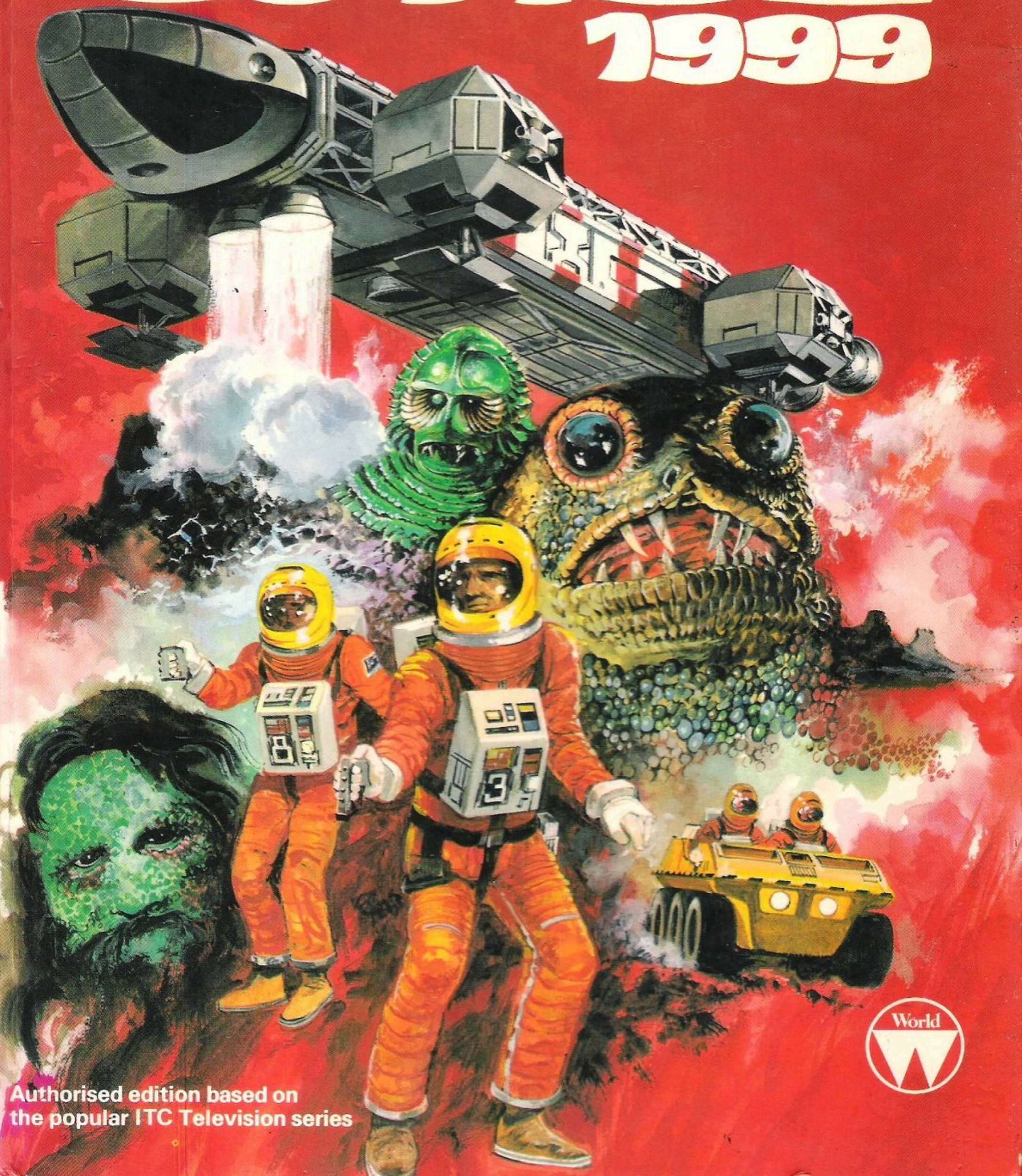
GERRY ANDERSON'S SPACE 1999

World

GERRY ANDERSON'S

SPACE 1999



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